

Schwarzkopf wants strong military presence in region

WASHINGTON (AP) — Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf said Wednesday the United States must maintain a strong military presence in the Middle East to prevent conflict from erupting there. Schwarzkopf, whose leadership of military forces in Operation Desert Storm has made him a national hero, said the allied success stemmed from state-of-the-art equipment, vigorous training and planning, and strong support from the U.S. public. But Schwarzkopf said another regional conflict, if not contained, could threaten vital U.S. interests. "We could again face substantial enemy forces armed with increasingly lethal conventional and unconventional weaponry," Schwarzkopf told the Senate Armed Services Committee. Dressed in his military uniform he said the United States must keep a military presence in the region. Schwarzkopf has announced plans to retire soon. Senators questioned Schwarzkopf about reports of controversy within the military that have emerged since the war ended. The blunt-spoken general described as "sheer unadulterated poppycock" a report that Schwarzkopf did not follow his orders precisely during the invasion of Kuwait. He said there was "zero interservice rivalry that occurred in the war."

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Talabani rejects draft Iraqi constitution

ISTANBUL, Turkey (R) — A Kurdish rebel leader said on Wednesday that Iraqi Baath party plans to ensure its monopoly of power and enshrine the personality cult of Saddam Hussein were a major obstacle in talks on autonomy for Kurds. Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), said: "The Baath Party has drafted a constitution which is not acceptable to us. This is a major obstacle to democratisation in Iraq." Talabani and Massoud Barzani, head of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), have been negotiating on autonomy for Iraq's 3.5 million Kurds since April, following the collapse of a Kurdish revolt.

Iraqi pilgrims leave for S. Arabia

BAGHDAD (R) — Several hundred Iraqi pilgrims left for Mecca on Wednesday saying they hoped they would be welcomed in Saudi Arabia despite the bitterness caused by the Gulf war. The pilgrims left the prosperous Baghdad neighbourhood of Zayuna in a dozen coaches each of which bore a poster showing President Saddam Hussein kissing the black stone of the Kaaba, a revered focus of the annual haj to Mecca. "We hope we will be well received. We are Muslims. We come in peace," Adnan Baghdadli, a 30-year-old businessman, told Reuters outside the Rubai Mosque.

U.N. to help Iraqi Shiites

GENEVA (AP) — The United Nations plans to extend assistance currently provided to the Kurds in northern Iraq to Shiite Muslims in the south of the country, top officials said Wednesday. U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar told reporters he was "quite worried" about reports from Iraq that hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Shiites were trapped in marshes in southern Iraq and facing a massacre by Iraqi troops. However, Sadruddin Aga Khan, U.N. special representative for humanitarian efforts in the Gulf, said a mission to southern Iraq last weekend "did not confirm the alarmist reports... and did not witness any exceptional mass movements," in the marsh area. "But we have to remain vigilant," he told a meeting of U.N. agencies and donor governments. Iraq has denied the reports that it is mounting an offensive against the Shiites.

Hogg leaves Lebanon with guarded optimism

BEIRUT (AP) — British Foreign Office Minister Douglas Hogg concluded a three-day visit to Lebanon Wednesday, saying that "trends are encouraging" for release of western hostages although there are no conclusive signs of an immediate release. Hogg made his remarks at an 8 a.m. (0500 GMT) news conference at the hilltop residence of British ambassador David Tatham in Rabieh before driving to Syria. "There are no conclusive signs of an immediate release," Hogg said. "I don't want to raise any false expectations, but the trends are encouraging and there's general feeling that I've encountered wherever I've been here that this tragic chapter is coming to a conclusion." Hogg said one of things he planned to do during his 24-hour stay in Syria was to "express my appreciation for what the government of Syria has done to explore what more could be done by that government."

Sudan to consider U.S. peace proposal

KHARTOUM (AP) — The government will consider a peace plan proposed by a U.S. official to end the African country's 8-year-old civil war, a Sudanese official said Wednesday. Ptolemy Yulwan Deng, a member of Sudan's ruling military council, spoke of a proposal by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen at a recent conference on Sudan in Washington.



Well-wishers sign a register at Al Hussein Medical hospital inquiring about King Hussein's health. (Photo by Yusef Al 'Allan)

Arab, world leaders call, cable King; Jordanians flood hospital to wish him well

King recuperating

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein has recovered from an irregular heartbeat ailment and is expected to leave hospital after completing a series of medical checkups, an official statement by the Royal Court said Wednesday.

The statement said: The Royal Court is pleased to announce that His Majesty has responded to the medicine given to him, and his heartbeat became regular at one p.m. Wednesday. His Majesty is recuperating and doctors have recommended that he leave after completing necessary clinical tests.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, His Majesty received cables of good wishes from Sultan Qaboos of Oman, King Hassan of Morocco and President Chadi Benjedid of Algeria.

The King also received a telephone call from Syrian President Hafez Assad and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak who inquired about the King's health.

President Assad wished King Hussein good health and both leaders exchanged views on the latest developments in the region.

Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi also called to inquire about the King's health.

French Ambassador to Jordan Denis Bauchard conveyed to the chief of the Royal Court greetings to King Hussein from French

President Francois Mitterrand who wished him continued health and happiness.

Sudan's President Omar Bashir called the chief of the Royal Court by telephone to inquire about the King's health, and he wished him speedy recovery.

U.S. President George Bush also sent a cable to King Hussein placing America's medical facilities under his disposal and wishing him speedy recovery.

Muslim pilgrims from the occupied Arab territories and Jordan now in Mecca for the annual haj sent cables to the King praying that he speedily recover his

(Continued on page 5)

Aziz starts talks in Ankara

ANKARA (R) — Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz began talks in NATO-member Turkey on Wednesday, opening a chink in Baghdad's diplomatic isolation since the Gulf war.

"The Iraqi people and government have the sincere desire to normalise...relations with Turkey," Aziz said at Ankara airport after arriving on a flight from Amman.

"We sincerely desire to further our relations by protecting joint interests and adhering to the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs," he said.

Aziz's visit to Turkey is the first by a senior Iraqi official to any of the countries in the U.S.-led coalition that drove Iraqi troops out of Kuwait in February.

The former foreign minister, who was Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's chief spokesman in the run-up to the Gulf war, requested the visit two months ago.

He was expected to try to persuade President Turgut Ozal to resume trade and re-open vital oil export pipelines to the Mediterranean which Ankara closed soon after Iraq's August 2 conquest of Kuwait.

Ozal told British Prime Minister John Major by telephone on Monday that he would be telling Aziz in "extremely robust" terms of the need to promote democracy and peace in Iraq.

He said on Friday that receiving Aziz did not signal a change in policy towards Iraq. Ankara has made clear it would not lift sanctions without U.N. Security Council approval.

"There is no doubt that Turkey will abide by a U.N. decision on the sanctions," foreign ministry spokesman Murat Sungur told reporters on Wednesday. "Without a U.N. decision it is out of the question that the pipeline be opened."

Turkey firmly backed the anti-Iraq alliance during the Gulf crisis and let U.S. planes bomb its neighbour from a southern base.

But the U.N. embargo on trade with Iraq has cost it hundreds of millions of dollars in lost pipeline fees, contracts and trade.

Ankara, battling its own separatist Kurdish guerrillas, is also concerned about the possible repercussions of autonomy talks between Baghdad and Iraqi Kurds.

(Continued on page 5)

'Israel must quit S. Lebanon'

Palestinians should pick own negotiators — U.S.

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Palestinians have the right to pick their own negotiators for peace talks with Israel, the State Department said Tuesday.

The assertion, by spokesman Richard Boucher, followed reports from Tel Aviv that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir had claimed the right of his government to approve any Palestinian delegation.

"Obviously, as we've said before, Palestinians must choose those who would represent them in negotiations," Boucher said.

He also announced that Secretary of State James Baker would meet Thursday with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy.

Levy's visit will also give President George Bush another chance to try to persuade Israel to drop its objections to even token U.N. participation in negotiations with the Arabs.

In four trips to the area, Baker

seemed to have resolved the Palestinian issue in his talks with Israeli and Arab leaders. The expectation was that Palestinians not identified with the Palestine Liberation Organisation would attend in a delegation with Jordan.

Since then, however, there have been indications the Palestinians might try to arrange for a delegation of their own.

As a result, Shamir told Israeli journalists on Sunday that his government would insist on approving the names of Palestinians attending the negotiations.

These developments could complicate the already-difficult task Bush and Baker face in trying to set up peace talks.

U.S. diplomacy already is stalemated over the twin issues of whether the United Nations would have a role in the negotiations and whether the conference would be reconvened in the event

of an Arab-Israeli deadlock.

"In another development, American Ambassador Ryan Crocker said in Beirut on Wednesday the United States was putting pressure on Israel to withdraw its troops from south Lebanon."

"As for the Israeli presence in south Lebanon, we think, and we have officially announced, that Lebanon should be freed from all non-Lebanese forces," Crocker told reporters.

"We are exerting pressure on Israel in south Lebanon."

Israel holds a 15 kilometre deep zone in south Lebanon which it carved out in 1985 to protect its borders from Lebanese and Palestinian guerrilla attacks.

Israel says its troops will remain in the south until Beirut can guarantee border security. Its planes raided Palestinian bases in

(Continued on page 5)

Waldheim begins Damascus visit

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — Austrian President Kurt Waldheim arrived Wednesday at the head of a political and economic delegation following a four-day visit to Iran.

Syrian President Hafez Assad greeted the Austrian leader at the Damascus airport. They rode together in a motorcade to the Tishrin palace, the official guest residence.

The pair held talks that included Waldheim's advisers and Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam, Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharara and Prime Minister Mahmoud Al Zoubi, Assad's spokesman Jibril

Kourieh said. The contents of the talks were not disclosed.

Assad and Waldheim were to meet again Wednesday afternoon, Kourieh said.

Austria and Syria signed an economic cooperation agreement in 1988. On Tuesday, an advance Austrian delegation arrived from Tehran to discuss its implementation.

Before leaving Tehran earlier Wednesday, Waldheim expressed concern over Iranian reports of a pending massacre of Shiite Muslims in Iraq, Iran's official Islamic republic news agency reported.

The former United Nations secretary general said that the U.N. Security Council should re-

solve the issue, said IRNA, monitored in Nicosia, Cyprus.

The Iranian ambassador to the United Nations called for such steps to be taken Tuesday.

Iran has claimed that 100,000 Iraqi troops stand poised to launch an aerial and land offensive to wipe out hundreds of thousands of Shiite refugees pinned down in Iraq's southern marsh lands since their failed rebellion in March.

U.S. and other western officials have said there is no evidence of an Iraqi military offensive, although there had been scattered clashes between Iraqi troops and Shiite rebels.

Political activists laud move towards pluralism without restrictions

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordanian Socialist Baath Party supports His Majesty King Hussein's ideas of having political parties in Jordan but not a congestion of multitudes of parties and believes in the freedom of creating political parties as provided for by the Jordanian constitution, according to the party spokesman Ahmad Al Najdawi.

Mr. Najdawi told the Jordan Times and Al Ra'i that the Baath Party does not support the idea of imposing restrictions or conditions on the political parties because this would infringe on their rights unless the restrictions aim at preventing an encroachment on the rights of others or the national security or state sovereignty.

As a national party, we are not affiliated to any other nation and we seek Arab unity and follow the principles and ideas embodied in the Great Arab Revolt which calls for unity among Arab countries and does not believe in the artificial borders set up by the colonialist powers, Najdawi said.

Azmi Al Khawaja secretary general of the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party said that his party believed in political pluralism without any restrictions or conditions that can harm the march of democracy. We believe Jordan's parties could merge once they have been created, if they need or find fit, but there should be no restriction on the formation of any party.

Amal Nafaa, a member of the political bureau of the Jordanian Communist Party voiced support for the creation of political parties describing the move as complementary to the general elections of 1989 and the democratic

process in the Kingdom.

Now that democracy is being enhanced there can be no justification for the continuation of the martial law, and its cancellation is not only a popular demand but rather a requirement for the democratic life in the country Nafaa said. She said that the Jordanian Communist Party adopts a political programme aimed at unifying all national forces.

Mohammad Abdul Rahman Khalifah, the Muslim Brotherhood's spiritual leader, said that Islam calls for the acceptance of various views so as to open the way for all groups to have a say. But the Muslim Brotherhood, he said, has reiterated its ideas, considering Islam as the source and authority of ideas and principles organising life in an Islamic society.

"In any case the idea of arresting someone based on suspicions is simply unacceptable," he said.

Mr. Kwar revealed that he has been in touch with Interior Minister Salem Masaadeh about the arrests. "The minister did not specify any charges but told me yesterday that he believed that the group must have done something which prompted the security forces to take such measures since there have been orders not to arrest anyone," he told the Jordan Times.

Security officials denied that the six activists were held for opposing government policies.

"We did not arrest them for criticising the government's policies or for their political views. But they had resorted to personal slander of the prime minister," a security official told the Jordan Times.

The six activists were rounded up by armed security forces after midnight on June 3, according to their families.

The security sources said that although the pamphlets were not signed by the group they found copies in the homes of some of those arrested. They did not specify the names of the activists who had the pamphlets in their homes, but said that Mr. Issam Al Tal, who is believed to be the leader of the group, has denied during interrogations any responsibility for the pamphlets.

The pamphlets, signed by the "Committee of Jordanian Youth," included a scathing cartoon of Mr. Badran and a satirical

(Continued on page 5)

Six political activists detained on charges of slander

By Lamis K. Andoni
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Security sources disclosed Wednesday that six political activists, who were detained on June 3, were being held for investigation on charges of distributing leaflets which contained personal slander against Prime Minister Mudar Badran.

But the same sources said that there was no evidence that the detained activists were the ones who issued or distributed the pamphlets except that copies of the leaflets were found in some of their houses.

The security sources said that if the investigation proved that the detainees — who are members of the Jordanian Communist Party "the revolutionary path" — were connected with the pamphlets they will be put on trial.

If the suspects were put on trial and convicted of the slander charges, they could face sentences of up to two years imprisonment, according to the Jordanian law.

But the security sources said that they were not sure yet if the suspects would be referred to court. "If they were to be put on trial, depending on the investigation, they will be referred to a civil court and not a martial court," the sources told the Jordan Times.

Meanwhile, the arrests sparked a debate among political activists and some parliament members who argued that the detention of the group was in contravention with the spirit of the democratisation process.

"No-one should be detained for his political views. Freedom of expression should be guaranteed by democracy," said Parliament member Fakhri Kwar (Democratic bloc, Amman) who has been in touch with the government over the affair.

Mr. Kwar said that he was not aware of the slander charges but ruled out the possibility that the activists, some of whom he knows personally, would pursue such means to express their opposition to government policies.

"I have just learned from you about such accusations, but these are unsubstantiated claims," he said. "I personally rule out such a possibility."

"In any case the idea of arresting someone based on suspicions is simply unacceptable," he said.

Mr. Kwar revealed that he has been in touch with Interior Minister Salem Masaadeh about the arrests. "The minister did not specify any charges but told me yesterday that he believed that the group must have done something which prompted the security forces to take such measures since there have been orders not to arrest anyone," he told the Jordan Times.

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(Continued on page 5)

Parents disgruntled with education meet prime minister, express satisfaction with meeting

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A delegation representing parents of private and public school children who have been protesting a series of controversial decisions taken recently by the minister of education Wednesday met with Prime Minister Mudar Badran and described their two-hour meeting with him as "fruitful, useful and full of constructive dialogue."

The eight-member group presented the prime minister with a petition signed by over 5,000 parents and educationalists, urging him to "protect the educational march from the dangers befalling it."

citizens as well as many organisations and groups started a campaign in May to prevent what they termed "politicisation" of education and protect "freedom of choice for parents and students."

The aim of the campaign, which included meetings with parents in the different private and public schools and climaxed in the signing of the petition, was to put pressure on the government to rescind a number of controversial decisions taken by the minister of education, Dr. Abdullah Akaileh, regarding ministry policies and appointments, the running of private schools and mixing between the sexes at school age.

"The prime minister understood our points of view and

discussed them with us. He was very very positive on quite a few number of points we raised," a spokesman for the 3-member delegation, Mr. Abdul Rahman Bitar said.

The petition which was handed to the prime minister during the meeting says "the series of administrative and educational decisions by the ministry exposes the educational process to imbalance."

Another member of the delegation said that the team also gave the premier copies of the minister's memos and written decisions in the past year.

Mr. Bitar told the Jordan Times in an interview that the 5,000-plus signatories of the petition felt that these decisions "reflect a theory in education that the parents of

students at all levels of education do not believe in."

"We told the prime minister that we find that these decisions do not serve any useful educational aim, and do not help or contribute to the development of our future generations," Mr. Bitar said.

"The decisions," he continued, "infringe on the freedom of parents in society as stipulated in the constitution and the law," Mr. Bitar said.

"We argued that a public servant cannot impose his private views and translations of the law and put them in place of the common and comprehensive translation of the laws and the constitution," Mr. Bitar said.

"That would mean that the law and the constitution are

contingent on one person's visions and that is harmful," Mr. Bitar added.

The idea of a petition was sparked by an April 30 decision by Minister Akaileh decreeing that fathers cannot attend certain activities of their daughters at school. But the move had been precipitated weeks earlier by a string of measures that the minister, who is a member of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, the junior partner in Mr. Badran's government, took to "Islamise" education.

These measures included introducing the "victory prayer," which children had to recite at their schools every morning. The prayer condemns western and Zionist influence and calls upon God to "bring their des-

truction through their own doing, may God enquire them, may God shame them and bring us victory over them."

Another controversial decision by Minister Akaileh was the laying off of 14-high-ranking officials at his ministry. The minister's measures reportedly also included banning male sports coaches from teaching sports to girls, limiting schools' freedom to close on Christian holidays (if they are not officially registered as Christian missionary schools), setting mid-term examinations in the week of the Christmas holidays and attempting to ban certain books deemed incompatible with the Kingdom's "religious and moral ethics."

(Continued on page 5)

Five years to cap Kuwait wells

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. oil well firefighter Red Adair predicted on Tuesday that limited equipment and water supplies in Kuwait could mean it will take up to five years to cap the estimated 450 oil wells still burning there.

The 76-year-old Texan, with nearly 50 years of experience fighting oil fires, told a U.S. Senate Gulf pollution task force, "at the rate we're going... if we get through in the next four or five years we'll be lucky."

Adair said firefighting teams have now extinguished 157 oil-well fires.

The Kuwaiti government and one of the other three firefighting teams working with Adair's team to extinguish the Kuwaiti fires said they could be extinguished within a year.

Iraq moves to limit health problems

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — The health ministry has ordered the closure of 271 roadside restaurants and banned the sale of white cheese in an effort to prevent disease in a country struggling under a U.N. embargo. The government newspaper Al Jumhuriya said the ministry was closing truckstops, cafes and casinos along intercity highways, apparently because of difficulties maintaining health standards. It also said the ministry had banned the sale of white cheese, a typical Arab food generally kept in liquid and sold in bulk. Health officials and foreign relief agencies have expressed concern that cholera, typhoid and other diseases could spread in the country as the temperatures soar into the 40s making it easy for microorganisms to grow in untreated water. The Iraqi News Agency reported Monday that 200 cases of cholera had been reported over the past month and that one patient had died. Iraq's water and sewage systems were damaged by allied bombing during the Gulf war. Much of Baghdad's sewage flows directly into the Tigris River, a major water source for cities and villages downstream, which often lack facilities to treat the water. The International Committee of the Red Cross has been importing chlorine in bulk to help treat water in Iraq, whose own chlorine-producing plants were battered during the war.

\$250,000 Libya award for American Indians

TRIFOLI, Libya (AP) — A \$250,000 prize, set by Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi, was given Monday to a group of American Indians in appreciation for their "struggle for freedom."

The group, comprising 21 native Americans from the United States, Canada, Mexico, Chile, Bolivia and Panama received the prize called the "human rights award" in a ceremony held at a conference hall in this capital city.

Gadhafi did not attend the ceremony which was used to criticize the "imperialist policies" of the United States, Israel and the West. Speaker after speaker called the U.S. and Western governments "gangsters."

A band of Libyan youth dressed in blue uniforms opened the ceremony by playing a tune called "Allah."

Among the tribes represented were the Mohawk, the Chippewa, Dakota and Choctaw.

Abdel-Hamid Al Sayeh, head of the Palestinian National Council or the Palestinian parliament-in-exile and Farouk Abu Issa, the head of the Arab Lawyers Union, were among the prominent speakers.

They praised the American Indians struggle against white domination drawing parallels with the Palestinians fight to end the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

"The United States, the leader of oppression which claims that it is the caretaker of the world, will inevitably end up in shame and humiliation," Al Sayeh said to the applause of the audience.

"They have suffered from oppression and racism. Israel is applying the same kind of colonialism through settlements," Abu Issa said.

The leader of the group who received the prize, held up the cheque with a broad smile on his face while posing for pictures. Libyan women in the audience ululated.

Wabun Inini, whose name means man of dawn, said the money will be put in a fund for all Indian nations.

Ruth Deeny, a native American from Minneapolis, said she does not believe U.S. allegation that Gadhafi was sponsoring terrorism.

"I fully realise what his reputation is, many of our people were considered terrorists such as Crazy Horse... I don't believe it," she said.

"If they call him a terrorist, they have to call (U.S. president) George Bush a terrorist for killing all these people in Iraq," she added.

CONGRATULATIONS

Olga Nawas and brothers
Extend their sincere
congratulations to
Dr. Ibrahim Nawas and
family on the occasion
of the graduation
of their daughter
Dr. Nadia
Ibrahim Nawas

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Afghan ruling party endorses U.N. peace plan

ISLAMABAD (R) — President Najibullah's ruling Watan (homeland) Party has endorsed a U.N. plan to end the 12-year-old civil war in Afghanistan, Kabul radio said on Tuesday. The five-point plan proposed by U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar last month has already been accepted by Najibullah's Soviet-backed government as well as Pakistan and Iran, who back the Afghan rebels. The broadcast, monitored in Islamabad, said an extraordinary session of the Watan central council supported the proposal on Tuesday expressed readiness to work for its implementation. Some hardline Pakistan-based Afghan guerrilla parties have rejected the plan, which entails a ceasefire and a transitional administration leading to elections. Some moderate guerrilla parties have expressed reservations. The Watan meeting expelled an embassy official in Bulgaria for betraying the party and the country, the radio said. It gave his name as Dastagir and did not say what position he held.

Israeli President Chaim Herzog arrives in Hungary

BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP) — President Chaim Herzog arrived Tuesday on the first official visit of an Israeli head of state to Eastern Europe, state television reported. Herzog will be in Hungary June 11-17, during which time he will have talks with Arpad Goncz, his Hungarian counterpart, as well as Prime Minister Jozsef Antall and church leaders. He also plans to unveil a memorial to Jewish martyrs. Herzog, who has visited Hungary on two previous occasions in a private capacity told the daily Magyar Hirlap (Hungarian Journal) last week that he was looking forward to his trip "with great anticipation." Antall visited Israel May 13 for a three-day official visit, the first ever by a Hungarian head of government.

Navy to investigate claim of ignored surrender in Gulf war

NORFOLK, Virginia (AP) — The navy said Tuesday it would investigate allegations that Iraqi soldiers occupying oil platforms off Kuwait tried to surrender early in the Gulf war but were ignored by allied forces. Five Iraqis were killed, three wounded and 23 taken prisoner when U.S. and Kuwaiti forces attacked 11 platforms on the night of Jan. 18, according to the navy's Atlantic Fleet headquarters. No Americans or Kuwaitis died in the skirmish, two days after the start of the war. The USS Nicholas, a frigate based in Charleston, South Carolina, led the attack. The allegations were raised after the frigate left the Gulf region, said Capt. Ken Pease, a spokesman for the Norfolk-based Atlantic fleet. The navy wouldn't identify the source of the allegations. After a preliminary inquiry, the commander of the Atlantic Fleet's surface forces decided to convene a formal fact-finding body to investigate the matter, Pease said. "The objective is to shed all the light on this combat action," Pease said.

Wife of Briton imprisoned in Iraq granted visa to visit him

LONDON (AP) — The wife of a Briton held in prison in Iraq for nearly six years said Tuesday she has been granted a visa to allow her to visit him for the first time in 12 months. Shirley Richter said Soviet envoys had promised to accompany her to visit her husband Ian Richter in the absence of diplomatic ties between Britain and Iraq. Richter, a 45-year-old chemical engineer from Richmond in southwest London, was arrested in Baghdad in 1986 and the following year was sentenced to life imprisonment over reported allegations of bribery to win business contracts. He is in Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad. Prime Minister John Major has said Richter is innocent and called for his release together with that on another Briton imprisoned in Iraq, Douglas Brand, a former Royal Marine commando. Brand was detained last September while working on a contract with President Saddam Hussein's government to clear mines and was later sentenced to life imprisonment for alleged spying. Major wrote to U.S. President George Bush earlier this month appealing for further U.S. pressure on Iraq to release the two men. British news reports said the names of the two were on a list of prisoners to be freed that was agreed upon by Iraqi officers at their meeting at the end of the Gulf conflict with U.S. Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, the allied commander-in-chief. The reports said Iraq released most of those on the list but continued to hold Richter and Brand. Mrs. Richter is scheduled to fly to Amman, Jordan, on July 6 and will be picked up by a Soviet diplomat either there or at the Iraqi border. She said she hopes to see her husband July 8. The London newspaper The Independent quoted her as saying: "The Soviets have been extremely helpful. They have been delivering mail from me to Ian and vice versa. Even before I got my visa, they had promised they would accompany me to the prison."

Nearly half-million pilgrims arrive in Saudi Arabia

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Close to half a million people from various parts of the world have so far arrived in Saudi Arabia for the annual Haj, or Muslim pilgrimage, it was officially announced Tuesday. The Saudi Press Agency, quoting Director General of Passports Major Gen. Fahd Al Sharif, said a total of 467,000 pilgrims had arrived in Saudi Arabia by Monday. The Haj to Islam's holiest shrines at Mecca and Medina culminates this year around June 23. By that time, an estimated 1 million people from abroad, plus an equal number from within the kingdom, are expected to have congregated at the shrines. The pilgrims, coming from around the world, are gathered at certain terminals known as Haj cities at Jeddah and various entry points into the country. They remain here a day or two until their passports are processed before they are driven to Mecca or Medina. Mecca is about 80 kilometres from this Red Sea port, while Medina is about 450 kilometres. Meanwhile, 2,500 pilgrims from the Soviet Union and 200 from Albania are coming at the personal expense of King Fahd. The Saudi monarch started the gesture in recent years as part of his attempts to enable Muslims in communist countries to perform the pilgrimage, a must for each able-bodied Muslim at least once in his life.

Troops seize large wazily of heroin in border area

YUKSEKOVA, Turkey (AP) — Turkish troops seized 201 kilograms of purified heroin near this village close to the borders of Iraq and Iran, the semi-official Anatolia News Agency reported Tuesday. It said the soldiers detained 14 people and seized two Kalashnikov rifles and chemicals used to refine the narcotic. Anatolia said the quantity of heroin would have had a street value of about \$50 million in the West. It did not say when the raid took place. Tucked in the rugged southeastern corner of the country, Yuksekova is a transit point and refinery for narcotics being smuggled overland from the Middle and Far East, drug enforcement officials say.

UNESCO blames Israel for deteriorating education in West Bank

PARIS (R) — UNESCO said on Tuesday Israeli-imposed curfews and sporadic closures of schools were eroding the level of Palestinian education in the occupied West Bank and Gaza. The board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation said a whole generation of pupils was affected. It appealed to member states to fund scholarships and grants for young Palestinians in the territories, where a revolt against Israeli rule has been raging for three and a half years.

Morocco's king surmounts problems in 30th anniversary year

MOROCCO (AP) — King Hassan II faced riots by the poor and mass protest of his decision to join the Gulf war allies, but he contented quickly dissipated. First, the king averted violence by backing off his threats to impose martial law.

Second, the opposition did not seize the initiative. By the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in mid-April, attention had shifted from the war to the depressed tourist industry.

Third, Morocco's long history as an independent monarchy lends Hassan's regime a unifying authority rare in the Arab World. The opposition, whose republican elements were crushed long ago, does not question the monarchy as an institution. But it wants more political power.

"All the problems stem from a non-participation in society," said Mohammed Bouziza, spokesman for the Democratic Confederation of Labour, a sponsor of the general strike.

"There is an absolute power that dictates the decisions," he said. "We don't contest the king. It's the form and content of the policy."

Officially, Morocco is a constitutional monarchy. In reality, no one doubts who rules. The king is chief of state, commander-in-chief of the armed forces and head of the Islamic faithful.

He gazes from photographs hanging in most shops, clad either in a Western business suit or traditional hooded robe.

Hassan solidified his image as a moderate Arab leader in 1986 by meeting with Shimon Perez, then prime minister of Israel.

He also persuaded neighbouring Algeria to halt military aid to the Polisario Front, Morocco's rival for control of the Western Sahara. That pushed the rebels into accepting a U.N. referendum, expected early next year, to determine who should control the mineral-rich territory.

Domestically, results are mixed. Morocco has attained agricultural self-sufficiency, but many peasants lost their tiny plots as farms modernised. Displaced rural families fill shantytowns around the major cities. The number of high school graduates has soared from 250 in 1956 to 80,000 last year, but many cannot find jobs. The official illiteracy rate is 65 per cent.

Although soldiers have put down riots by the poor at regular intervals, Morocco was one of the few African states with a legal opposition before experiments with multiparty government began elsewhere on the continent. "We can no longer escape from democracy," said Khalid Jemai, editor of the opposition newspaper L'Opinion. "There are the beginnings of a middle class. The middle classes need democracy to grow."

Algeria closer to new government

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria's prime minister designate on Wednesday began a second, intensive round of talks to try to form a non-party government to prepare elections put off after violent clashes with Muslim radicals.

Sid Ahmed Ghazali promised a caretaker administration free from party influence after President Chadli Bendjedid sacked the former government and imposed a state of siege in response to demonstrations last week in which up to 50 people were killed.

The capital appeared calm with tanks and troops stationed only at key sites and main roads. But the military made several arrests after curfew and other minor incidents.

Some strikers who backed the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), general strike, called off last Friday after it degenerated into violence, faced problems getting their jobs back.

A spokesman for the Islamic Workers Union, close to FIS, said 30 per cent of the strikers had not been allowed to resume work although they were starting slowly to be accepted.

He did not give a total figure of those who had gone on strike.

He said among the worst examples was the Hassi R'Mel gas and oil plant where he said about one-third of the total workforce of about 3,000 was still locked out and over 1,000 security men guarded the plant.

FIS Leader Abassi Madani tried to visit the plant on Sunday to help what was then said to be a figure of 250 strikers regain their jobs but was turned back at a security checkpoint.

The union said several hundreds of other strikers at several refineries were not yet back at work.

Newspapers also reported problems for those who had supported the FIS strike. El Moudjahid, the organ of the former ruling National Liberation Front (FLN), appealed to Ghazali to announce an amnesty for the strikers.

"This would be a most brotherly decision at a moment when the country has so much need of calming gestures," it said.



Abassi Madani

The FIS last Friday called off its strike saying it had won, and general and presidential elections would be held this year.

Le Quotidien D'Algerie said on Wednesday that 150 former strikers were threatened, with sacking at Algiers port and other workers were having problems going back to work.

Most of the country's key installations, such as gas and oil, were largely unaffected by the strike.

Ghazali has met around 200 people in his attempt to form a government. They included representatives from among the 39 parties who had been due to compete in Algeria's first multiparty general elections on June 27, leading personalities and members of cultural and other associations.

Appeals for ending the state of siege, imposed for four months with a promise to lift it earlier if the country's returned to normal, have been ignored.

El Moudjahid in a front page report said it should be maintained because of the grave threat hanging over Algeria.

It said that before FIS leaders called off the general strike, armed groups planned to use a peaceful march that day to open fire on crowds and security forces.

The newspaper said FIS leaders were warned of the groups' plans before Friday prayers and called off their strike.

The FIS was demanding changes in electoral laws it said favoured the FLN and early presidential elections.

The parliamentary poll is expected within months — with politicians and Western diplomats saying October or November are the most likely dates.

Islamists emerge from political shadows

RABAT, Morocco (AP) — Students praise their honesty. Labour unions court them as allies. They have burned American flags and marched for Iraq. They urge the faithful to repent.

In a nation whose monarch claims descent from the Prophet Mohammed, Islamic fundamentalists are emerging from the political shadows.

"They're divided and haven't reached anything like the power they have in Algeria, but they're there," said Abdelaziz Bennani, a human rights lawyer. No firm estimate exists of the number of fundamentalists among Morocco's 24 million people, but they have appeared by the thousands at recent political events.

About 100,000 people, many with ties to Islamic movements, joined a pro-Iraq march Feb. 3 in Rabat.

Thousands of fundamentalists marched through Casablanca on March 1 in a May Day demonstration organised by two unions. A U.S. flag was burned.

The fundamentalists are gaining increasing influence on university campuses. Some students feel the fundamentalists are honest and the government corrupt.

In Casablanca, a medical student was killed April 18 when police with clubs dispersed a crowd protesting the dismissal of fundamentalist student leaders.

Morocco's fundamentalist movement has much less power than the Islamic Salvation Front in neighbouring Algeria, which had posed a serious challenge in parliamentary elections that had been scheduled for June 27.

President Chadli Bendjedid of Algeria postponed the elections June 4, after declaring a state of emergency in response to nearly two weeks of violent protests by the front's followers.

No umbrella organisation unites the diverse Islamic groups in Morocco and the government's long acceptance of some political opposition dilutes the discontent that fed fundamentalist movements in Algeria and Tunisia.

Abdellah Yassine, the best-known Islamic leader, is under house arrest. He first incurred royal disfavour in the 1970 with an open letter that accused King Hassan II of being a pleasure-seeker.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 77311-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
18:00	Teens watch
18:00	Cartoons
18:30	Documentary
19:00	News in French
19:15	Documentary
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Day By Day
21:10	Daddy Intentions
22:00	News in English
22:30	Movie of the week: "Kaleidoscope"
PRAYER TIMES	
03:55	Fajr
05:27	(Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:33	Dhuhr
16:13	"Asr
19:38	Maghrib
20:10	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swaidah Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terzianita Church Tel. 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772561	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 827981, 685326	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 813817 and 654932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
It will be fair and winds will be northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Amman	Min./max. temp. 15 / 28
Aqaba	22 / 36
Deserts	13 / 30
Jordan Valley	20 / 35
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 27, Aqaba 35. Humidity readings: Amman 50 per cent, Aqaba 25 per	

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Adnan Al Zughoul 898140
Dr. Mufeed Tamara 884480
Dr. Ahmad Al Dagh 676473
Dr. Mohammad Abu Mahfouz 793244
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 637055
Nairoba pharmacy 633672
Al Salan pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
St. Michael pharmacy 637660

IRBID:
Dr. Ali Samman (—)
Al Shams pharmacy (275825)

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 608800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (—)

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Himein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn 642816
Alkhalid Maternity, J. Amn 642412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 604171/4
Shmeisani Hospital 669131

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in Esh per kg.
Apple 720 / 450
Banana 300 / 450
Banana (Mukammal) 450 / 400
Beans 550 / 250
Cabbage 100 / 50
Carrot 240 / 180
Cauliflower 300 / 250
Cucumbers (large) 120 / 80
Cucumbers (small) 220 / 160
Eggplant 400 / 350
Garlic 300 / 400
Lemon 370 / 300
Lettuce (per one) 150 / 100
Marrow (large) 100 / 50
Marrow (small) 170 / 120
Onion (dry) 200 / 150
Orange 350 / 200
Pepper (hot) 320 / 260
Pepper (sweet) 360 / 300
Potato 300 / 250
Radish 150 / 100
Sage 450 / 350
Sweet melon 250 / 120
Tomatoes 220 / 160
Watermelon 240 / 90

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

16:00 New Delhi (RJ)
16:15 Riyadh (RJ)
16:25 Dhahran (RJ)
16:45 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
17:25 Larnaca (RJ)
17:40 London (RJ)
18:00 Cairo (RJ)
18:30 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:45 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
18:55 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)
19:15 Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

14:05 Bahrain (GF)
20:30 Cairo (MS)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

12:00 Abu Dhabi-add (RJ)
12:30 Montreal, New York (RJ)
13:00 London, Paris (RJ)
13:30 Larnaca (RJ)
14:00 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
21:00 Jeddah (RJ)
21:30 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

14:05 Bahrain (GF)
20:35 Cairo (MS)

مركز الأصل

Home News

JORDAN TIMES, THURSDAY-FRIDAY, JUNE 13-14, 1991 3

Jordan, Germany sign grant agreement

AMMAN (J.T.) — An agreement was signed at the Ministry of Planning Wednesday, paving the way for the disbursement of a German grant, totalling 150 million DM, about \$105 million, to help finance Jordan's purchases of German commodities and services.

Agreement on the grant was reached during a visit to Jordan, last February, by German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher. The signing came amidst ongoing German-Jordanian discussions in Amman about future economic cooperation and future German aid to Jordan.

The German Bank for Reconstruction will provide the grant by paying for Jordanian services and commodities bought from Germany as of last February, under the terms of this agreement, and through a list of purchases to be submitted through the Central Bank of Jordan, a statement here said.

According to the statement, the \$105 million grant comes in the form of assistance to the Jordanian government to compensate it for part of the losses it sustained during the Gulf crisis.

Germany granted Jordan another 180 million DM in December of last year, considered in excess to the annual aid under the technical and financial assistance programme to the Kingdom.

In announcing the aid to Jordan last February, Mr. Genscher said that his country considered Jordan as a stable country and would like to see it remain as such. "We are interested that Jordan maintains its stability under these difficult circumstances," the German minister had told a press conference upon ending his visit.

The agreement Wednesday was signed by Ministry of Planning Secretary General Safwan Touqan and Mr. Franz von Aulock, head of Department for Jordan at the German Bank for Reconstruction, which is supplying the grant.

Abdul Majid to visit Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — Arab League Secretary General Ismat Abdul Majid will be visiting Jordan in his forthcoming tour of Arab countries, which also includes Syria and Lebanon, according to Jordan's Ambassador to Egypt Nabil Al Nimer.

Mr. Nimer told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, by telephone, that the visit would take place soon, but no date has yet been named.

Mr. Nimer said that he met with Mr. Abdul Majid and discussed ending differences among Arab countries to pave the way for solidarity and pursue the path of collective Arab action.

The ambassador said he stressed Jordan's determination to bolster solidarity among Arab countries and exert efforts to overcome weaknesses in inter-Arab relations.

Mr. Abdul Majid and Mr. Nimer reviewed the Arab League secretary general's recent tour of Gulf countries, which, Mr. Abdul Majid said aimed at ending differences among Arab states.

Mr. Nimer said that the Arab League secretary general's tour was satisfactory and expressed hope that he would follow up the efforts to achieve solidarity.

4,000 to graduate from University of Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — The University of Jordan will Thursday turn out its 26th batch of graduates and, according to dean of the Students Affairs Department Mohammad Mamsar, 4,000 students will be awarded their Bachelor, Masters or Doctorate degrees.

The graduation, he said, will take place at the Amman Sports City.

The Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) graduated its third group of students Tuesday at a ceremony held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan. The Crown Prince distributed degrees and diplomas to 490 male and female students, including 38 who completed their postgraduate studies in engineering, pharmacy, nursing, public health, medicine, and dentistry.

He also presented the distinguished students with special awards.

The Prince congratulated the graduates and noted in an address that science and technology were important for economic development, therefore it would serve as an important tool in the distribution of the nation's wealth.

He said that utilisation of physics and chemistry could lead to the production of new materials that can bring about a change in human life.

The Crown Prince said that there was urgent need to encourage science and its application if Jordan was to preserve its potentials and achieve further development.

"Any university has the responsibility to promote higher studies in all their forms, link education to the needs of the local community and prepare students to confront the challenges of the modern age," Prince Hassan said.

JUST President Kamel Ajlouni also delivered an address outlining the university's continued endeavours to develop its different departments and congratulating the graduates and their parents.

Several ministers, deputies and officials as well as members of diplomatic missions were present at the ceremony.

Robbery case investigated

By Ahmad Kretshan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The prosecutor general is currently holding investigations into a case involving three citizens who were said to have broken into a house in Abdoun and got away with its contents.

Investigations involve 15 other persons who helped peddle the various items of furniture stolen from the house.

The owner of the house reported to the police that he spent some time with relatives in Maraka, a district of Amman. A few days later he came back to the home (he had rented in Abdoun) only to find the door broken and



Her Majesty Queen Noor Wednesday addresses a Rotary Club meeting debating environment and its protection (Petra photo)

Queen urges concerted efforts for protecting the environment

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Wednesday urged all citizens to cooperate in protecting the Jordanian environment through exploring the available mental, material and artistic means.

Queen Noor said in an address delivered at a Rotary Club meeting at the Jordan Intercontinental Hotel, held under the theme "Preserve the Planet Earth," that His Majesty King Hussein has always shown a keen interest in conserving nature. "In 1965, many years before environmental concerns caught the attentions of developing countries, His Majesty King Hussein, recognising the vulnerability of Jordan's unique natural environment, launched the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature," Queen Noor said.

The Queen added that King Hussein, at the second world climate conference in Geneva, last November, also warned of ecological problems that might result from an armed conflict in the Gulf region.

Her Majesty affirmed that the Gulf war has led to grave environmental consequences on the region.

At the national level, "we must cooperate to rescue our environment urgently," Her Majesty said.

The Queen added: "The closure of 30 factories in the Zarqa area earlier this month is a sign of the government's determination to protect the environment from the impact of private companies that may not be fully aware of the harm they do to their country, to their fellow Jordanians and to themselves."

The Queen highlighted the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature's efforts for preserving wildlife. She urged businessmen and professionals to exert all efforts to protect the environment for present and future generations.

"The history of our country indicates that we are able to rise to such a developmental and human challenge. The future of our country dictates that we must do so with unprecedented urgency and diligence and the character of our country suggests that we can do so most successfully if we work together in a close partnership of collective awareness, concern and giving," the Queen concluded.

Six more factories reopen

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government has allowed six more factories, closed last week, to reopen after having taken steps to abide by the required specifications set by the Public Health Safety Committee, according to an announcement by the Amman Chamber of Industry.

With the reopening of the six factories, the government has thus allowed 20 factories, out of 30 closed, to reopen for business. The factories were closed after being found by the end of last month, to have failed to comply with the regulations.

The end of May deadline was given to all factories to install equipment to ensure the treatment of waste water flowing down the Zarqa River and contaminating other areas.

A spokesman for the Amman Chamber of Industry said that a special committee, representing the ministries of health, municipal and rural affairs and the environment, water and irrigation, industry and trade as well as the Amman Chamber of Industry, was conducting field studies to ensure that all factories are abiding by the committee's regulations before allowing them to reopen.

The spokesman said that some of the factories were still encountering technical difficulties in complying with the regulations, but they were ready and willing to provide the funds to purchase the required equipment.

The contaminated water of the Zarqa River, flowing towards the King Talal Dam, was reported to be responsible for the damage of vast areas of farmlands in the Jordan Valley.

The spokesman said that businessmen and industrialists proved their keenness, on cooperating with the government and various organisations in fighting pollution to the environment, and have recently financed the creation of a dumping site for the industrial waste at Swaga, south of Amman.

Last Saturday, the prime minister ordered that three factories, closed for violating health safety regulations, open. The waste water discharged by these factories has a minor effect on the Zarqa River, the prime minister said, but he stipulated that these factories tackle the violations.

The prime minister also issued directives that the other factories be opened once they have installed equipment to treat water and have abided by the committee's regulations.

Health Minister Adnan Jaljoui commented on the decision by saying that the factories were classified as causing minor, medium or heavy pollution in the Zarqa region itself, two factories remain closed because their pollution of the river proved to be heavy, he said.

The whole issue will be referred to the Council of Ministers, but a solution for the problem has to be found eventually, the minister pointed out.

Dr. Jaljoui also noted that owners of factories that had been closed for some time would be referred to court to determine the amount of damage they had caused and to give a ruling in their cases.

Documentary film in Petra

AMMAN (J.T.) — In cooperation with Jordan Television (JTV) and the Department of Antiquities, the French Embassy in Amman is producing a series of documentary films dedicated to the archaeological sites of Jordan.

Last December a first film was achieved about Qusayr Amra which was transmitted by JTV on May 25. Meanwhile, this 26 minute film was proposed to more than 35 state television from Europe, Africa and Asia, thanks to the Intelsat satellites used by Canal-France-International (CFI).

Hopefully, this second film will be also transmitted by foreign televisions as their contribution for a better knowledge of the archaeological Jordanian heritage.

Once again, with JTV and the Department of Antiquities, another film is now produced on location in Petra. Mr. Omar Elaidi, the French TV director in charge, is filming there from June 9 to June 17 before he undertakes editing and post-production in Amman.



Brig. Yousef Qousus

Doctor promoted

AMMAN — Brigadier Yousef Qousus, a cardiologist in charge of His Majesty King Hussein's treatment at Al Hussein Medical City has been promoted to the rank of major general. King Hussein himself decorated him with the rank Wednesday.

Arabiyat calls for implementing a responsible democracy in Jordan

By Serene Halasa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Latif Arabiyat Wednesday stressed the importance of a responsible democracy in Jordan, one that entails respecting other people's opinions and allowing freedom of expression for all.

Dr. Arabiyat, former speaker of the Islamic Bloc in Parliament, said that the process of drafting the National Charter was an example of responsible democracy. He added that the commission members were able, through open dialogue and exchange of views, to agree on points that "we never dreamt of attaining."

Dr. Arabiyat said that he was happy with the way democracy was moving along in Jordan and attributed its success so far on the awareness of the Jordanian people.

"The Jordanian people are aware of the current circumstances," he said. "And we should cooperate together in order to achieve positive results."

During his weekly press meeting, Dr. Arabiyat strongly criticised what he referred to as "a group of people who look for faults and defects in the system and when they don't find any, they make them up." He said that such people do not work for the good of the public, but are only seeking to advance their personal goals.

As for the role of the Jordanian press, Dr. Arabiyat encouraged freedom of expression, which he considered a pillar of democracy, but advised against making mistakes, such as slandering people with differing views.

"We should avoid opening the door of slander, especially against people with differing views," he said.

Speaking about the role of the Jordanian media in a democratic system, Dr. Arabiyat also said that the media, in general, should work for the good of the public by presenting actual facts in a truthful manner. "The press, for example, should avoid big, misleading headlines, that do not correspond with the story, especially if such headlines are harmful to the public good," he said.

Dr. Arabiyat also spoke of his trip to Iraq and his meeting with the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. He said that the trip was positive and came in response to an invitation by the Iraqi National Assembly.

"We felt that the morale of the people of Iraq was still high, in spite of all the misgivings that befell them following the aggression against their country," Dr. Arabiyat said.

He also added that both sides had agreed on strengthening bilateral ties, and stressed the need for cooperation between the two countries in order to "frustrate the imperialist Zionist aggression against Iraq."

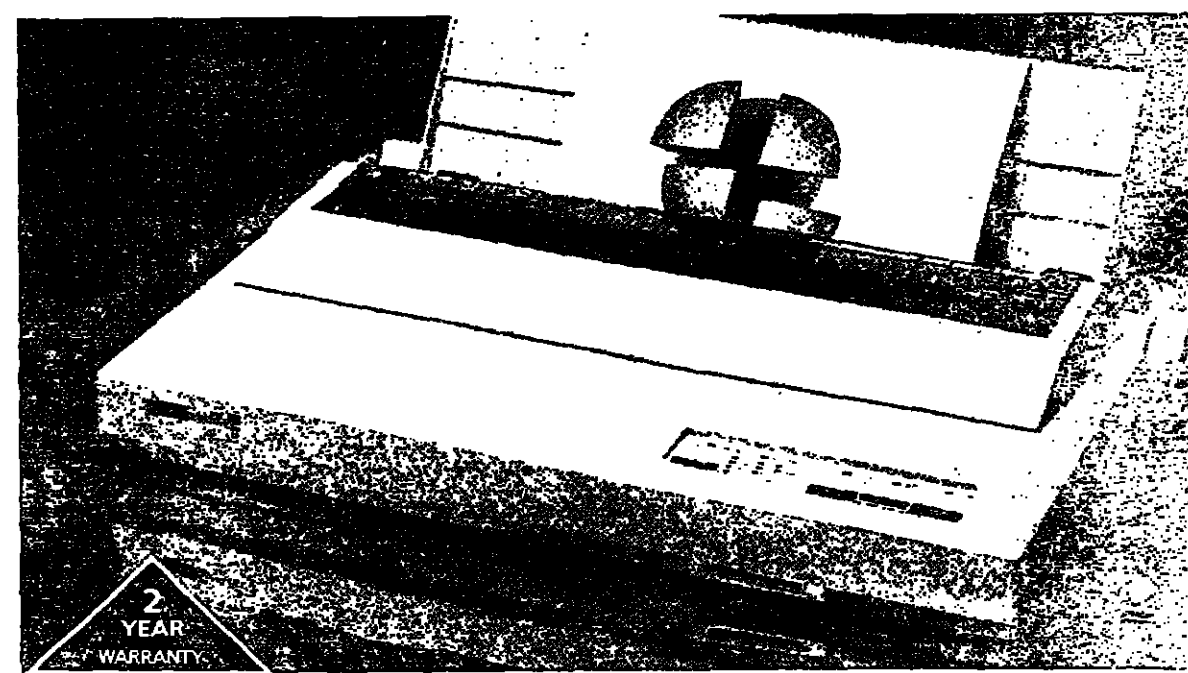
The Jordanian parliamentary team in Iraq also met with the speaker of the National Assembly, Mr. Sa'adoun Hammadi. Both sides had agreed on the urgent need to lift the economic embargo imposed on Iraq since August, and on maintaining the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.



PRINCESS SARVATH ATTENDS GRADUATION: Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Wednesday attended the graduation of a group of students from the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf, in Salt, and distributed diplomas to the graduates who completed their academic and vocational training at the institute. The Princess later toured parts of the institute and was briefed by its director Brother Andrew de Carpentier on the institute's development and programmes. The institute, which was established in 1964, offers training to deaf students from various parts of the Kingdom and from the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip. While the male students get

training in wood work, automobile and auto-body repair, the girls are trained in computer work and dress making. The institute applies the "oral approach" to the education of the deaf whilst it practices the principle of "total communication" with regard to the development of communicative skills. According to Brother Andrew, the institute endeavours to be instrumental in the personal development of its students and to provide a comprehensive education for the deaf and hearing impaired in order to enable them to attain an integrated and meaningful role in society.

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Regional security in the Gulf: The geopolitical realities

By Yezid Sayigh

WHEN Egypt decided, some time between mid-April and early May of this year, to withdraw its forces from the Gulf, it signalled the demise of the wartime coalition of Arab states that originally came together to confront the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait of August 1990. What made this move especially significant was the fact that only two months had passed since top-ranking representatives of the same countries had met in Damascus to announce the creation of "the nucleus of an Arab peacekeeping force prepared to maintain the security and safety of the Arab countries in the Gulf region." This was to be based on the Syrian and Egyptian contingents already in the region, and was to provide the model for an eventual Arab defence framework.

Thus was born the Group of Eight, as it was referred to in Arabic, or the six-plus-two (the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, plus Egypt and Syria). Yet between March 6, when it was declared, and May 8, when Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak made public the decision to pull out of the Gulf, the various ministerial follow-up committees did not meet once. Equally, grandiose comments by GCC officials, including its secretary-general, Abdullah Bisharah, that Arab allies could expect massive financial economic aid (up to \$15 billion, some officials said) were not amplified any further in detail or substance.

Inherent flaws

At an immediate level, the rift was primarily the result of differences over approaches to Iran and over the extent of Western (effectively American) involvement in providing military security for the Gulf. Reports suggest that Egypt disagreed with moves by Kuwait (especially) and other

GCC members to involve Iran more actively in Gulf security, and that it preferred reliance on Arab contributions in the post-war phase to the point almost of complete exclusion of a direct Western role in regional defence.

True as these reports may be, they should not obscure the fact that the six-plus-two set-up was seriously flawed from the outset. On the one hand, it studiously ignored the vital function that Jordan played during the Gulf war as a buffer between Israel and Iraq (and the Gulf), and so wrote the Kingdom out of both a role and a stake in the post-war Arab system. Rather, the tone among Gulf states remained one of punishment, a short-sighted and vindictive attitude shared by the U.S. Congress, albeit less so by President Bush.

More fundamental, despite the Egyptian view to the contrary, was that the six-plus-two composition perpetuated longstanding Saudi policy of excluding both Iran and Iraq from formal structures concerned with Gulf security. This may have been understandable in the short-term, given the freshness of both Gulf wars, but it had grave implications. Exclusion of either Iraq or Iran, or of both countries, overlooks geographical and strategic realities and condemns the GCC states to permanent dependence on support from countries even further afield. It also implies an inability, or unwillingness, to alter the previous pattern of balance of power politics and to establish a new basis for cooperation and security in the Gulf sub-region.

Furthermore, any long-term arrangement that fails to draw in Iraq is dangerous because it ignores that country's pivotal position (in both geographical and strategic terms) between the Gulf and Arab-Israeli theatres, suggesting that Iraqi involvement

is necessary for the success of wider regional stability. This will become even truer once Iraq starts to reconstruct economically and revive politically, and if Iran emerges again as a regional power.

Limits of Gulf-Syrian ties

These were by no means the only flaws, though. Wartime solidarity and post-war rhetoric notwithstanding, the patterns of relations between the eight members of the six-plus-two coalition in previous decades suggested that their current alliance would prove ephemeral. Had Egypt not pulled the rug out so early, this would have been most obvious in the case of Syria, which was the least significant contributor to the war effort during the Gulf crisis. Lack of a common border and internal considerations in Damascus seriously delayed Syrian support and severely limited its extent. The Saudi leadership had long "bribed" its Syrian counterpart with large subventions to purchase its goodwill and moderate its foreign policy, but at the end of the day it was opportunistic considerations (realisation that Iraq would lose, and the desire for better ties with the West) that swayed Damascus. Above all, the Gulf crisis underscored the limited importance of Syria as either ally or foe of Saudi Arabia and the other GCC members.

Geopolitical realities affect Syrian-Gulf ties in another respect. This is the prospect of long-term disengagement between the GCC states and most Arab countries to their north in the post-war period. For many years the Gulf states, oil-rich and population-poor, relied on Jordan, the Palestinians, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq (among other Arab and non-Arab countries) for expatriate labour and professionals. The GCC members additionally depended on Jordan, Syria and Iraq

for military assistance or strategic protection, in varying forms and degrees. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait undermined this relationship, partly because official and grassroots reactions in many parts of the Arab region damaged ties, and partly because the "northern tier" Arab states were demonstrably unable to offer real protection or indeed posed the threat themselves.

This experience has prompted GCC government thinking (principally Saudi, followed by Kuwait) towards curtailing financial assistance to other Arab states still further and reducing dependence of their labour — already over 800,000 Yemenis and some 200,000 Palestinians have been compelled to leave. For Syria, the implication is that it too will suffer, despite lip services by GCC states to fraternal ties and token aid, as the peninsula Arabs disengage strategically and economically from their "northern tier" brethren.

Paradoxical as it may seem, similar considerations affect the relationship between the GCC and Egypt, which proved to be a more dependable, and militarily useful, ally than Syria during the Gulf crisis. Nonetheless, the absence of a common land border and the logistic difficulties of moving significant Egyptian forces to Saudi Arabia did not go unnoticed. This suggested maintaining a substantial Egyptian contingent with prepositioned armament and supplies in the Kingdom (and Kuwait), which the six-plus-two pact indeed confirmed. However, several factors worked against a real conviction or commitment among the GCC states to such reliance on Egypt (and Syria). On the one hand there was an inescapable and marked contrast between the administrative, logistic and technological superiority displayed by Western forces in the Gulf and

the more modest Egyptian capabilities. On the other hand was the traditional Saudi preference for military support by out-of-area powers over the physical presence of forces from regional neighbours. The deep-seated attitude that "foreign" goods and experts are better than Arab or Egyptian ones had previously led GCC leaders to avoid the products of the Egyptian arms industry, for example.

Whatever the hopes of the Egyptian leadership, the distribution of Gulf reconstruction contracts since the latest war shows just how little Egypt counts for in GCC vision. The GCC states understand full well that economic and commercial ties must underpin security relations — after all, that is how the Saudis have courted the U.S. — but they do not seek so firm a relationship with other Arab countries. It is not surprising that the Egyptian pullout was announced following an emergency meeting of the GCC on May 5 at which the Gulf leaders apparently took their final decision on who to approach for security and defence. U.S. Secretary of Defence Dick Cheney arrived in the region three days later, to visit all six GCC states and confirm a series of collective and bilateral ties with the U.S.

The implications for Egypt and for Middle East politics are major. Because its own sub-region — embracing Libya and Sudan (and to some extent the rest of the Nile Valley and Red Sea littoral, to include Ethiopia and Somalia) — is strategically insignificant, Egypt has always sought to enhance its stature and thus attract financial and economic assistance by involving itself in the Arab-Israeli conflict and Gulf security. Already the Egyptian government has reflected this pattern by reviving its role in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, mending relations with the PLO

among others, and by insisting on rehabilitating the League of Arab States, which is the only regional body that offers scope for its leadership ambitions.

Egypt's priorities

Egyptian Foreign Minister Boutros Ghali reflected precisely these priorities in January 1991 when he identified Palestine, joint Arab defence and development, and the creation of an Arab parliament and other joint bodies as main goals. His predecessor and new Secretary-General of the Arab League, Imad Abdul Meguid, reiterated a similar focus after the Gulf war, in mid-April, when he stressed the central status of the Palestine problem and the role of Egypt as primary mediator between the Arabs.

As "odd man out" in their own sub-region, Egypt and Syria forged an axis in spring 1990 which was the basis of their late alliance during the Gulf crisis and more recently of their membership in the six-plus-two coalition. Yet the Egyptian-Syrian axis is the product of passing strategic circumstances and, given the experience of similar attempts in 1958-61 and 1971-73, is unlikely to last unless a common Arab policy is developed towards Israel, since that remains the principal common denominator between the two countries.

More to the point, Egypt, as well as Syria and most Arab countries, will revert to their former insistence on resolving the Palestine problem and, in the absence of resolution, will renew their resistance to arms controls and similar Western proposals. That may be the path to rebuilding relations with Iraq, and it will then be up to both the GCC states and the West to contend with the wider implications for regional security and stability — Middle East International, London.

Kuwait's defective trials

FRESH NEWS filtering out of Kuwait suggest that gross and systematic violations of human rights are still rampant there in spite of the international outcry against them. The kind of horror stories coming out of the emirate speak of torture and mistreatment of non-Kuwaiti nationals on a scale unheard of before, even including those who stood by Kuwait and its people during their seven-month ordeal under occupation. Some of the acts of torture that go on against non-Kuwaitis are so savage and barbaric that words cannot describe. At a time when the Arab Nation complains about the victimisation of Arabs under Israeli occupation there can be no excuse or justification for an Arab torturing or tormenting another, subjecting her or him to inhuman and degrading treatment. The sort of atrocities being perpetrated in Kuwait against Palestinians, Jordanians, Egyptians and others would make a mockery of Arab concern about human rights violations in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. How can an Arab torture a fellow Arab or deprive him or her of his or her inalienable right to justice and fairness is something that will tarnish forever not only the Kuwaiti image and reputation but also that of the rest of the Arab World. For the whole world to see the extent to which some countries are prepared to go in order to help their fellow countrymen the sight of Arabs maltreating fellow Arabs on the top of denying them residency and working rights is something that will surely scar the image of the entire Arab peoples everywhere. And all these grave violations of Arab rights at the hands of their brothers come on the heels of persistent reports that the ongoing trials in Kuwait are nothing but a masquerade and kangaroo trials that belie Kuwaiti protestations that the emirate seeks only to bring the collaborators with Iraqi occupation to justice. The trials have been found by Amnesty International to be so lacking and deficient that it called on Kuwait to halt them immediately. "Unfair trials," the London-based human rights watchdog complained Tuesday, "are had enough in cases where defendants face penalties of imprisonment but they are absolutely intolerable where the penalty is death." Amnesty has since concluded that the trials are so defective that the sentences rendered by the Kuwaiti court need to be suspended pending the exercise of the right of appeal. When a plunger becomes in the eyes of a Kuwaiti martial court a collaborator for simply repairing a toilet that was used by the Iraqi occupying authorities, then something is so blatantly wrong and vindictive with the administration of Kuwaiti justice.

But as yet there is a glimmer of hope that the Kuwaiti leaders are at last beginning to feel the injustice being perpetrated by their courts and police force. Recent news reports speak of a number of Kuwaiti policemen being put on early pension as a consequence of the proliferation of the cases of torture and inhuman treatment in the country. These are a most welcome news reports but they do not go far enough. The Kuwaiti torturers need to be brought to justice and the unfair and defective trials must be brought to an end. Also Kuwait will be well-advised to establish an appeal court to review the past trials and reverse the sentences passed that are ill founded. The stakes of Kuwait and the rest of the Arab Nation are indeed high and warrant an immediate rectification.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Wednesday discussed the question of free press which was referred to by His Majesty King Hussein in his nationwide address upon the endorsement of the National Charter; and said that the monarch has given the media the role of monitoring the actions and practices of the legislative and executive authorities in the Kingdom. The paper said free press should be able to serve the higher national interests and; therefore, it is expected to rise up to the level of responsibility and be bold enough in its drive to help put things right again. The free press, the paper added, should be able to help provide protection to the country's democracy, shielding it from internal and external hostile forces alike. As we enter a new phase in our history with the advent of the political pluralism the role of the press looms larger and larger, and should naturally become more significant in the days to come because the media represents the arena where all political forces can express themselves and all citizens can have a say, the paper noted. It said that a free press is not a mouth piece for the government or the members of parliament, but it is rather a media for the masses helping to serve their causes and safeguard their interests besides supporting or opposing the legislative and executive authorities as the case might be. The paper said that a serious responsibility awaits the media which alone can focus the light on the dark sides of life in all its sectors and under all circumstances.

All Dussour Arabic daily tackled the Israeli position with regard to the commencement of the peace process and said that Israeli leaders continue to impede any initiative and obstruct any path leading to peace. In addition to the long series of impossible conditions the Israeli government has presented, its prime minister has just come up with additional conditions demanding that Jordan name the Palestinian representatives in the coming peace negotiations, said the paper. Furthermore, Israel has given itself the right to oppose the presence of any "undesirable" member of the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation if peace talks are to start, the paper added. With such impossible conditions, especially for the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, Yitzhak Shamir is thus undermining the whole idea of peace because never before in the world's history had nations imposed such conditions on the other side; and this attitude can only reflect the arrogance and racist nature which characterise the Zionist thinking, said the paper. Shamir and his government are defying the whole world by a holding on to the occupied territories, and are now imposing terms and conditions practically unknown in international law, thus providing further complications which can never be conducive to peace and stability, the paper pointed out. The paper said the Arabs have strong reason to believe that Israel's long series of conditions are only meant manoeuvres to stall for time, and can never reflect the Jewish state's tendency towards reaching peace with its Arab neighbours.

Study diagnoses U.S. politics as sick, Americans angry

By Bernd Debusmann
Reuters

WASHINGTON — A new report has diagnosed U.S. politics as sick and says Americans feel shut out of the political process by politicians, lobbyists and journalists.

The report contradicts the widely held assumption that Americans are apathetic about politics. Instead, it said, they are so angry and frustrated that many no longer believe they live in a democracy.

The report was commissioned by the Kettering Foundation, a respected non-partisan research institution based in Dayton, Ohio, and founded in 1927 to

investigate problems in the practice of politics.

Its latest report was based on interviews with Americans from all walks of life in 10 cities.

The key finding of the study: Americans would like to participate in politics but think they no longer have access because the system is driven by money, not votes, and run by a professional class that pursues its own interests and speaks a language of its own.

"People point their fingers at politicians, at powerful lobbyists and at people in the media," said Kettering President David Mathews, a former U.S. secretary of health, education and welfare.

"They see these three groups as a political class, the rulers of an oligarchy that has replaced democracy. Citizens know that the political system is now designed to respond to interest groups rather than individual citizens and they are hopping mad about it."

According to Mathews, the study "leaves few doubts that politics in America is in a state of critical illness" and shows that Americans want fundamental changes in the way politics is practised.

Since money and privilege are widely seen to have replaced votes, the report says, many people see no point in taking part in

elections.

The report was issued seven months after mid-term elections which were shunned by 110 million Americans and confirmed a long-term trend of declining voter turnout which reached a 50-year low in 1986 and has stayed at that level since then.

Now, the United States, which sees itself as a shining example of democracy, has the highest rate of abstention of any democracy in the world in mid-term and presidential elections.

In elections last November, for example, only 36.4 per cent of the electorate turned out. In comparison, Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Israel, Holland,

Sweden, Norway, and New Zealand all have participation rates of more than 89 per cent of eligible voters.

One of the reasons for widespread disenchantment with the political process in the United States, according to the report, is the pervasive influence of money in election campaigns where candidates often spend millions of dollars to get 100,000 dollars a year jobs.

The report found that Americans blame media coverage of politics for pushing the average citizen further away from politics rather than bringing him closer.

Participants in the group discussions on which the report is based singled out the practice of

television to use short "sound bites" to convey information.

Many criticised the media as a whole for "negativism" and for playing up issues of little concern to main street America. "There is a lack of trust... (about) what the media put out," the report says. "People are no longer sure that the coverage they see, read or hear rings of the truth."

Most Americans understand "politics" in terms of Congress, the president and "national" issues, according to the report. And in that context, politics is almost a dirty word.

"Politics is like leprosy: People don't want to be around it," Mathews said in the foreword to the study.

Japan's bid to end enemy clause threatens U.N. power structure

By S.L. Bachman
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Seeking diplomatic prestige to match its economic might, Japan wants the United Nations to erase passages in the U.N. charter that refer to it as a World War II "enemy."

But the campaign to remove what Japan sees as a loose thread from the 1945 charter threatens to unravel the U.N.'s delicate power structure in the post-cold war era, analysts say.

The enemy clauses were designed to allow the 51 U.N. charter nations to act against their World War II foes without prior approval of the Security Council.

The five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council — the United States, Britain, France, the Soviet Union and China — sympathise with Japan's request to erase the outdated phrasing. But analysts and diplomats say those countries fear any change to the charter.

Even a cosmetic alteration deleting the "enemy clauses" could stir up a hornet's nest of demands for other charter changes. And questions might be raised about the permanent members' own supreme position in the U.N. hierarchy.

"A Pandora's box... sums up nicely what the members, especially the permanent council members fear," said a Foreign Ministry official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

A U.S. official, speaking on the same condition, confirmed that Washington does not want the question of the charter opened up.

Fears of change, and awareness of Japan's passive role in the Gulf war, have weakened Tokyo's chances for an even bigger prize: A permanent seat on the Security Council.

Japan sent no military personnel to the Gulf war, and its \$13 billion financial contribution was delayed by divisive debates over getting involved in a military conflict. Japan's constitution prohibits its use of force to solve international conflicts.

Nonetheless, Foreign Minister Taro Nakayama recently stepped up Japan's campaign to scratch the hated phrases from the U.N. charter.

"The 'enemy clauses' are inappropriate and meaningless in the present time, and so they should be rapidly eliminated," Nakayama said in a speech to the U.N. General Assembly last fall.

His campaign draws credibility from Japan's role as the U.N.'s second largest single donor after the United States. Tokyo was asked to pay \$105 million this year for its upkeep. The U.S. contribution was set at \$272 million.

The U.N. charter doesn't specify enemies of the 51 original signers. But the countries are generally understood to be Japan, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and Finland.

"The term 'enemy state'... applies to any state which during World War II has been an enemy of any signatory of the present charter," article 53 says.

Article 107 permits any charter signatory to take war-related "action" against enemies.

Article 53 allows regional security organisations to take "enforcement action" in wartime or to stem a possible "renewal of aggressive policy" by enemy nations.

The clauses haven't inhibited Japan's growing role in the U.N., but they are a painful reminder of its past.



Taro Nakayama

"Legally speaking, they are meaningless, but their very existence makes us feel segregated, although we've tried to help the U.N. very much," said the Foreign Ministry official.

In recent months, Japan has debated creating a special military force to participate in U.N. peacekeeping missions. It also won a key position in December when Sadako Ogata, a Tokyo University professor, was appointed U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

Nakayama, the foreign minister, has gained expressions of sympathy for his campaign from the five permanent Security Council members, as well as other nations such as Canada. But he has no commitments.

By all accounts, changing the U.N.'s basic document is not an easy task.

Four articles were amended from 1963 to 1971. The changes dealt with such issues as increasing the membership of the economic and social council, temporary membership in the Security Council, the number of votes required to pass measures in the

council, and calling a general conference for charter review.

Discussions about U.N. reform often focus on proposals to alter the Security Council's membership to reflect changes in geographical or political power balances.

"If the charter is amended, the Security Council question will come up," said Shizuo Saito, former Japanese ambassador to the U.N.

Apart from Japan, such countries as India and Brazil have indicated an interest in winning a permanent seat on the powerful body.

There are 10 rotating non-permanent seats in addition to the permanent members. A charter change also would require a two-thirds majority in the General Assembly.

Some observers have suggested Japan would have to curry favour with many of the world's smaller members by offering economic assistance in exchange for votes.

Of the other so-called enemy states, Italy and Romania have voiced strong support for Japan's request.

Germany, preoccupied with the task of reunification, is uninterested in pushing the issue. "We don't think it is worthwhile," said Helmut Ohlraun, press councillor at the German Embassy in Tokyo.

In Japan, some critics also say the cosmetic change isn't worth the effort.

"There is something else more important to do, and that is the basic reform of the U.N. to meet the challenge of the post-cold war period," said Tatsuro Kumagi, a university professor who is a former U.N. employee.

LETTERS

Open your eyes

To the Editor:

UNLESS one drives around with one's eyes shut, one is constantly being confronted by blatant violations of the law whether it be in the areas of environmental pollution, building and zoning, or the basic seat belt law. I suggest that a future basic requirement for government office should be eye examinations. Government officials who need to wear glasses would be acceptable, as would be any who weren't tested clinically blind.

I find the sudden concern about the pollution of the Zarka River ironic. Unfortunately, it took the destruction of vital food crops in the Jordan Valley before action was taken to remedy a problem that has long been with us. I have often remarked, during our trips to northern Jordan, about the "lovely white foam" gliding down the river looking ever so much like gleaming icebergs or pretty cotton balls. The contamination of the river due to the Zarka factories has been going on for years and probably would be still had it not been for the crop damage. If I have seen and been aware of this pollution... how many thousands of others like me have seen it too, including our officials, or don't they travel to northern Jordan?

A second violation, easily seen, are the zoning requirements for buildings, whether being apartment buildings or office buildings. Living in Shmeisani, I am acutely aware of development in my area. Daily I see buildings being constructed on streets which are already crowded and strained for parking space. After inquiring I have been told that parking space has to be provided in a plan before a licence is given to build. In the rare instance when this is being enforced, the required parking provision is for the employees or owners only, not for future customers or visitors. This "shortsightedness" results in increased overcrowding of busy streets, resulting in traffic jams and human frustration. One needs to look no farther than the "Gardens" street for an example of this!

In conclusion, a last obvious major violation is the "seat belt law." Why do we even bother to have this one on the books? Jordan professes to be concerned about the high number of injuries due to car accidents. In the past few years, we have: 1. Enacted a seat belt law; 2. Rescinded a seat belt law; 3. Reenacted a seat belt law. Perhaps this is why so few people use their belts, they are probably confused about which status this law is today! My appeal is that we all, as citizens of this vibrant country "open our eyes" to what is around us. We and our children are the ones who are going to suffer the consequences of our "poor vision." Our officials have all the right intentions, even though many have been guilty of "turning a blind eye," and most of our laws are good ones. Let us either retract all of them and start over again, or let us "open our eyes" and enforce those which already exist.

Karen Asfour,
P.O. Box 6367,
Amman.

مركز الأصل

Weekender

Where is music going to?

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In a very short time since they were first released a few years ago, compact discs — CD's — have become the favourite music storage media for the audiophiles, and are phasing out the traditional vinyl LP, thanks to the unsurpassed technical quality of the music they channel. At almost the same time, modern synthesizers and digital pianos, as well as advanced digital recording techniques have brought inexpensive and apparent near-perfection to each household, confirming the supremacy of electronics not only in warfare but in everyday life. Technology transfer being a reality, most of these techniques and equipment have been available in Jordan almost at the same time they appeared in the USA or in Europe.

Is all this helping musicians make better music? Is this art — in all its forms: Classical,

Arabic, jazz, popular, folk, etc... gaining in creativity? Are we witnessing a new renaissance or are we deceived by gadgetry and illusive make up?

Apart from drums and percussions, the very first musical instrument that man used to produce played notes was a simple piece of reed, cut with a few holes. Blown, or wind instruments were born. Music was monophonic then, that is to say only one note could be played at one time, and no predefined scales existed that the performer had to follow.

With time, the shepherd's pipe evolved, other families of instruments appeared (strings, brass, etc.). Each instrument was constantly improved. New instruments needed more advanced mechanics: the pianoforte (the "piano") and the saxophone for instance. However the major advancement in music was, and by far, not on the instruments themselves, but on musical structures,

forms and expressions, in summary on the very art of music making, rather than on manufacturing and mechanics. Scales were defined, polyphony appeared. Harmony and counterpoint became the two pillars of modern music, it was progressing. Quarter tones were added to Arabic music.

At the wake of our century, composers started exploring uncharted seas in music. Modern musicians introduced the dodecaphonic or serial system whereby all notes have the same relationship with the others, contrary to the main major and minor scales. This was by no means the only change, but probably the most important one. However, several decades later, and even though the twentieth century is coming near its end, the music of Xenakis, Stockhausen and others has not won the hearts of music lovers worldwide, to speak about the vast majority.

Modern music therefore, and except for those who can be considered as "figurative" like Debussy or Ravel for instance, has been rejected and sometimes accused of being meaningless and inhuman.

Not surprisingly, and perhaps to compensate for this rejection, popular music in its many genres including American jazz, African jazz, Arabic and western folk music, rock music, Brazilian rhythms, etc., won a very important place in everyday life. Notwithstanding the pejorative label that some still insist to put on it, popular music took the biggest share of the market, to put it in business terms. And business is what it has all become, an industry to be more accurate. It is no secret that nowadays a successful classical performer might or might not earn in a lifetime. A few years ago, Bob Dylan was paid \$2 million for singing 70 minutes in a

concert. Like any art, music has always been a mixture of business and pure art. Today, the music industry has raised the proportion of business so high in the formula, that in most cases, little place is left to the real art.

Whether due to the absence of real innovation and creativity in the art of music composition, or just because electronics is our era's most obvious revolution, countless electronic instruments have been developed. Like double blade knives, these machines make sound creation very easy, but using them in an artistic, original and expressive way requires talent and effort. To add to the gadget, therefore to the commercial side, a typical synthesizer-keyboard proposes tens if not hundreds of sounds or voices as they are often referred to. Not only do most of them sound desperately the same, but one wonders how any composer, including the greatest, could handle so many of them.

While classical music is still looking for new blood, popular music is satisfied with remakes of the sixties and the seventies "hits" that benefit from a facelift with new rhythms, arrangements and digital recording. Even if a remake is not really new material, the artist's cash box still rings with a sound beautiful enough to keep him happy.

Because of its inherent and extremely flexible structure, jazz is in a permanent revolution. The freedom that jazz musicians enjoy to improvise at all levels and the wide acceptance of miscellaneous influences, ranging from African to Oriental and even classical, contribute to make jazz a launching pad rather than a landing strip. Although fanatics of Louis Armstrong and Herbie Hancock might clash sometimes, musicians tend to agree that jazz is one

of the most progressive forms of music. It is also less commercial than pop or rock music.

Purist lovers of Arabic music long for the days of Sayyed Darwish or Mohammad Abdul Wahab, considered as the classics. With the undeniable influence of Western pop music, and the increasing usage of synthesizers to emulate oriental instruments and scales, Arab musicians are irresistibly tempted to make fast, easy, but often tasteless Arabic music. Some blend oriental tunes with disco rhythms. Ironically, many Western musicians are using

the same formula but with a much more convincing result.

Listening to Peter Gabriel's beautiful soundtrack of Martin Scorsese's *Last Temptation of Christ* is a proof that the operation is not impossible but takes a real artist and a lot of work. To achieve what he had in mind, Gabriel asked Lebanese, Armenian and Syrian musicians to perform alongside his regular musicians, for the recording of his original score. High quality production — recording, mixing, editing and mastering — had certainly a lot to do with the success of Gabriel's work. Ziad Rahbani made real jazzy arrangements for some of his famous mother's — Fairuz's — well-known songs, back in 1989. They were greeted with mixed feelings. The production quality in Western recordings is usually superior to those made in the Arab World. Recently, old, original recordings on tape of Um Kalthum were released on CD. Unfortunately the tapes were transferred to the CD without being processed by electronics in order to reduce the hiss sound, improve frequency response and enhance dynamics.

In Jordan, local pop group Mirage constantly seek to



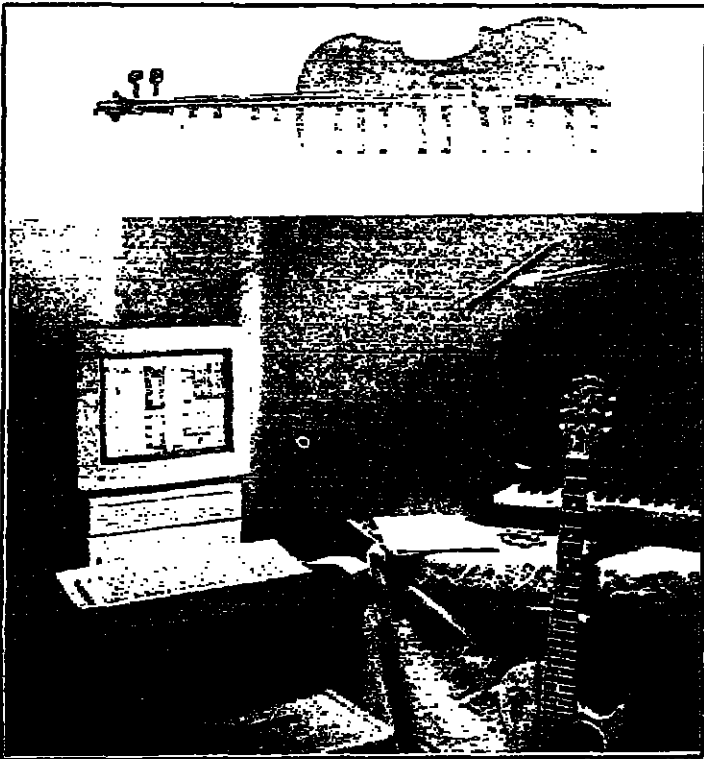
conciliate their love for Oriental and Western structures, admitting the strong influence of English bands like Pink Floyd.

For the pessimistic, music, whatever the style might be, is in a dead end. All structures, rhythms, scales, harmonies and genres have been systematically explored and there is hardly room for improvement

or innovation. Any changes or additions can only be cosmetic. The only light to be seen is in the creation of new sounds and instruments, thanks to advanced synthesizers and digital samplers.

For the optimistic, electronics have nothing to do with musical creativity. Music has always been a reflection of social customs, conditions,

structures and activities. Since these are changing, music will follow these changes. With the giant steps the world of communications is taking every day, our planet is getting smaller and the interaction between peoples, cultures and arts is an ever increasing process which undoubtedly will lead to new and bright forms of music.



Electronics, computers revolutionise modern music

Perdita Huston — An Advocate For Women

By Clare Perdrick

LONDON — In the international development community, Perdita Huston is known for her outspoken ways. She has often railed against the spending policies of some of the largest relief agencies, including those that have employed her. And she has no time at all for what she describes as "the great white fathers" — the decision-makers who pontificate about the problems of the developing world without ever bothering to talk to those who live there. That, she says impatiently, is the arrogance with which "the literate speak of the illiterate."

In spite of her forthright manner, Huston is highly regarded in her field. Unlike the "great white fathers," Huston has been there, and colleagues respect her for it. In nearly 30 years in the business, this American-born health worker, sociologist, journalist and author has traveled the world, often living in primitive conditions among the people whose views she was eager to hear. She directed U.S. Peace Corps programmes in North Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific. She has lectured widely on her experiences in the developing world and has written books and articles in which she allows the people concerned to speak for themselves.

Now 54 and a grandmother twice over, Huston continues to travel. Her latest project is an ambitious undertaking on behalf of the London-based International Planned Parenthood Federation, for whom she works as a consultant. She plans to visit a

dozen countries in four continents to research a book on some of the figures whom she most admires — the pioneers of the family-planning movement.

Getting women to talk about their lives and problems is a particular talent of Huston, and she will go to great lengths to achieve her aim.

For one of her books, *Message From The Village*, she traveled by bus, train and jeep to remote settlements in six countries — Tunisia, Egypt, Kenya, Sudan, Sri Lanka and Mexico — and recorded conversations with more than 200 women in which they described their lives, their families and their hopes and fears for the future.

"Persuading them to speak was not always easy. Most of them had never talked about these things with anyone before," said Huston. "When I used an interpreter I would always make sure it was a woman who was from outside. I found people would speak more freely if they thought no one else in the village would ever know what they said."

Huston's research took her almost five months to complete. The results, she said, convinced her of two things — that women in the developing world have something very interesting to say, and that family planning is a key issue of the quality of their lives is ever to improve. "Women were all saying the same thing: 'I want to have fewer children than my mother did,'" said Huston. "They said, 'if I have just a few children, then they could be educated and get jobs, and then they could take care of me in my old age.'"

"Before I went, a lot of people thought I was crazy to want to go and talk to illiterate, rural women about subjects such as reproductive health," she added. "We were supposed to deal with these issues without ever speaking to the people concerned. In fact, their wisdom and intelligence were so remarkable that people doubted whether they actually said these things. But I had the tapes."

Huston's interest in women's issues, and in family planning in particular, was sparked by her earliest encounter with the developing world, when she lived in Algeria during the early 1960s. The war for independence there was in full swing, and Huston's French husband, who was a medical student, was called up. His young wife, then 25, decided to go with him and soon found herself working in a French-run resettlement camp that held about 7,000 people, most of them women, children and old men. "It was a very sad time, and a very frightening time," she recalled. "I distributed food, acted as their scribe as they were illiterate and helped trace their menfolk. Even though I spoke very little Arabic I learned that there is a language that women speak that has to do with the commonality of our experiences, our worrying about our husbands, our children and health. One of the things they asked me was why I didn't have a child every year. That greatly marked me and set me on a path that I never left."

Another event that marked Huston during the same period was the death of an

Algerian woman who had tried to perform a primitive abortion on herself. "She tried to abort what would have been her sixth child, using the local method, which was a dry geranium stem," said Huston. "Her other five children were all malnourished, and she was desperate not to have another. She perforated the uterine wall and lost so much blood that it was just a matter of minutes before she died, in my arms."

Ask Huston about family planning and she will tell you that 300 million women who would like to use family planning methods are unable to do so because of a country's politics or poor health-care facilities. She will tell you that more than one third of the 140 million women who became pregnant in the past 12 months did not want that child, that one of every 21 African women dies in childbirth. She will tell you that the world's population is expected to double in the next century to 10 billion, more than 90 per cent of that number in the developing world. And she will tell you that if a child is born at least two years after its older sibling, it will have a 50-per cent higher chance of survival, and that the greater the spacing between two children, the healthier the mother and the new child will be.

Huston will also tell you about the woman she stayed with for four days in a forest in Cameroon while making a film for the United Nations. "She was 32, and had six or seven children and her husband had a lame leg," said Huston. "She got up at 4:30 each morning. She left for the fields at 6 a.m. and came

back at 3:30 p.m. Then she went to fetch the water, washed the kids, started cooking the dinner, and when she had finished the cooking she did the laundry, put the kids to bed and finally went to bed herself at about 11:30 p.m. And her husband refused to let her have her (Fallopian) tubes tied."

Religion also plays its part, though Huston is more critical of the Roman Catholic Church's stand on family planning than that of Islam. "I don't actually think Islam is an impediment to family planning," she said. "The U.N. Population Fund asked Islamic scholars to look at the texts of the Koran, and they found there was nothing which forbids birth control. In fact there are several texts which relate to the well-being of the family which could be interpreted as meaning that birth control is justified when a family does not have the means to support a large number of children."

Iran, said Huston, has expressed an interest in working with family-planning organisations in the field of women's reproductive health — a first and crucial step. Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Algeria, Pakistan, Morocco, Sudan, Turkey, Bangladesh, India and Indonesia all have family planning associations.

"I think most governments, with the exception of Albania and until recently Romania, now recognise that some kind of demographic control is very important to anything they may try to do," she explained.

So far, Huston's new project has taken her to three continents. In the Dominican Republic she traced the story of Evangeline Rodriguez, who was born in 1879 with, as Huston puts it, four points against her. "She was black, at a time when the Dominican Republic was barely emerging from slavery, she was poor, illegitimate and female." Nevertheless, Rodriguez went on to become the country's first female doctor, introducing family planning ideas from Paris, where she studied, and using her own money to help lepers and prostitutes.

In Egypt Huston researched the story of Zahia Marzouk, whom she describes as one of the most "enchanted, lively, creative individuals" that she has ever met. "She died eight years ago, but I met her once, back in 1976, and was totally mesmerised," said Huston. "She was born at the turn of the century into an upper-middle-class family. She studied in England, becoming the first Egyptian woman to do so, and it was such a scandal that she didn't tell her mother until a few days before she was due to leave. She went back to Egypt...and eventually founded the country's first family planning association, in Alexandria. She was remarkable because she was one of the first people to look at the whole woman and at the family" — World News Link.



Perdita Huston

PEN PALS

To the Editor:

I am a woman from Sweden. I have always been interested in your country and culture. I would be happy if you could help me to get pen-pals through your newspaper. I am 33 years old. I am a nurse and my interests are: culture studies, travelling, music, reading and writing poetry, art and tennis.

Please write in English to:

Elaine Bergersen
Sulfitig 4d
66600 Bengtsfors
Sweden

Kindest regards

Elaine Bergersen



Yousra

Change of image puts star on international track

By Katia Sabel

CAIRO — She made her first film when she was 16, and at 32 she is taking stock of a career that's just recuperating from too much trivia.

Yousra's prettiness has graced more than 60 movies. Too many, she says, adding that she is trying to break the stereotype of the sexy blond beauty. Too often her roles were decorative but vacuous. That page is turned, and she wants the real Yousra to show her acting talent.

Yousra's career changed course just as she began looking for more serious scripts. She met director Youssef Chahine, an old master of the Egyptian cinema who has received widespread critical acclaim and is one of few contemporary Middle Eastern filmmakers who enjoys international stature. Their teaming up seems promising: The results are two movies — *An Egyptian Story* and *Alexandria Again And Again* — both very well received.

Yousra's talent has grown as she matured, and she has become more discriminating

in her choice of roles. As part of that strategy, she recently accepted a part in a film directed by Al Badrakhan. Although he has made only six films, Badrakhan has left his mark and is seen as a rising star in a new generation of Egyptian directors. The Yousra-Badrakhan film is based on *The Island Of Goats*, a play by Italian playwright and poet Ugo Betti. Yousra plays one of four characters, three women and a man. In an elegant but decaying house in the countryside, the four live through an intense array of emotions — from love to passion, to hatred and jealousy.

Not an easy film to make and a challenge by all accounts. But Badrakhan stacked the odds in his favour by enlisting three other big names in Middle Eastern cinema: Soud Hosny (his favorite star and ex-wife), Ahmad Zaki (an Arab Mastroianni-in-the-making) and a promising young Lebanese actress.

Today Yousra can claim to have realised her childhood dream: She has won respect

in her chosen profession. The days seem far away when, as the only child of well-to-do parents, she took ballet lessons, attended private school and dreamed of becoming a star. "As a child, there were two things I knew were for real: One was the love of my mother, a special kind of love, full of tenderness, understanding and complicity. The other was friendship: I had friends whom I loved like the sisters I have never had."

Even now, her mother's love is what she treasures most, and friendships matter deeply. The solidity of these feelings making up for the trauma of her parents' divorce when she was 14. "My father gained custody rights and tore me away from my mother," she recalled. "For two years, I was not allowed to see her or my friends. Grief and anguish took hold of my entire life." She focused all the energy of her frustrations making her dream of acting come true. She had the looks for it: Tall, handsome, elegant, she also displayed a talent for singing

and dancing. Her parents having many artist friends, including top movie star Leila Mourad and her husband, Mounir, she received valuable advice and introductions.

"Mounir Mourad always used to tell me I would have a brilliant future in the entertainment world," she said. He had her meet director Hussein Kamel, but nothing came of it. She received her first movie offer from another top director, Hassan Al Imam, who wanted her for a film called *Pain On Lips That Smile*. However, her father forbade her to take the part, in which she would have played a man's mistress.

Yousra's big break — or so it seemed — came when director Abdel Halim Nasr offered her the leading role in a movie he was directing and producing. "I remember he told me: I am giving you a very heavy responsibility. You must always live up to the confidence people place in you. Don't ever accept being anything less than that, ever." The film was totally forgettable, a failure. Not an encouraging start, but Yousra

still values that piece of advice and says she has always followed it. It helped her give her best, regardless of the quality of the film.

One of the sayings in the film world is that "you cannot make a good film with a bad screenplay," and Yousra admits that her choices have not always been judicious. "I have made mistakes, many mistakes," she says. "Very often I was trying to please friends. I did not dare turn down parts because I did not want to disappoint people who showed confidence in me."

The series of mediocre films she accepted would have been enough to ruin anybody's career, except for that "special something" that made her increasingly popular. Until the mid-1980s the roles that she was offered had little substance, though, and she remained trapped in a stereotype: the elegant, sophisticated and wealthy urbanite.

In the meantime, Yousra fell in love and married. It was not a happy relationship. Yousra is candid about it:

"Her husband was a business man who travelled and was never there when she needed him. But more important, he had children from a previous marriage and was unwilling to start another family. There was a contradiction: still have not worked out," says Yousra. "This man claimed he loved me — I'm sure he did — yet he never wanted to have a child with me. Couldn't he understand that a child is what I wanted most in the world?"

Time has healed the wounds and has helped Yousra know what she wants out of a relationship: She is open about her feelings: "I would like to find a man who knows how to give me his love, his strength and his reassurance. That way I will be able to give myself entirely to him, as well as carrying on with my work. I want a man who is proud of what I am and what I do. I want a child. My main problem in life right now is that I want a child, the child of a man who loves me and whom I love."

A pretty simple kind of happiness, one would think.

African artist uses rural theatre to fight poverty, corruption

By William MacClean
Reuters

MASERU — African playwright Zakes Mda applauds when audiences invade the stage and start ordering the actors about.

It's even better when they start rewriting the whole play, the politically-minded academic says.

Mda says his brand of participatory theatre staged in Lesotho's village square and fields combats powerlessness and poverty among rural people in this army-ruled mountain kingdom.

"It's unlike in Europe or America where you just sit and watch a play and then afterwards applaud," he said in an interview.

"Our audiences are vocal, so we exploit that to the fullest. And they will not just be vocal from the sidelines. They actually come on to the

stage and shows us how it should be if they feel that what these characters are doing is wrong," he said.

"Dialogue and debate are created. The villagers who want to expose corruption name real names."

Mda, 43, professor of English at the University of Lesotho, says much conventional "agitprop" drama is pre-packaged preaching that encourages oppressive political attitudes.

He says theatre devised by the poor themselves is a more effective way of eroding dependence on development aid and stimulating criticism of corrupt rulers and tribal chiefs.

"This can be a dangerous perspective in many Third World countries because it contends that development must imply liberation. The ruling classes may not be amused," he said.

The 1.6 million Basotho

have benefited little from the \$1 billion in foreign aid commitments provided since 1970 by 25 countries and 72 development agencies.

The aid was aimed at easing Lesotho's economic dependence on apartheid South Africa, which encircles the country and provides work for Basotho migrant workers on gold mines.

In one year the country received \$49 in foreign aid for every man, woman and child — more per capita than impoverished Somalia or Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa.

Yet most projects fail and the country remains one of the poorest in the world. Wealth measured by annual per capita gross domestic product is near the bottom of the scale at about \$200.

"The starting point of development is often in the mind of the expert and not in the reality of the man who is

developing," wrote Lesotho historian Mosebi Damane.

"People are called to a meeting to be told how to stop soil erosion, but the foreign concepts used are hardly ever adequately explained. These concepts, furthermore, often clash with our cultural beliefs."

Mda and his actors live with the inhabitants for several days before performing in a village to learn its problems. They devise a play on the issues with the villagers, who invariably intervene during the performance and often act parts themselves.

"Any spectator can replace any actor and lead the action in any direction," he said.

Problems have included illegal land sales by local chiefs who go on to pocket the profit, soil erosion, child disease and immunisation, sexual disease and the migrant labour system.

One of the most heated plays was by women angry with South African unions whose pay strikes led to sacking of their migrant worker husbands. Children had gone hungry as a result.

Afterwards most spectators resolved that Basotho should support South African unions, even in political disputes. A minority said Basotho had no business in South African affairs.

Mda said: "Development here fails mostly because somebody from America, or even from here in Maseru, will draw up a very beautiful plan without talking to the people to hear what they say and find out what they want. Money is pumped in as long as the donors are here. But when they go, the project dies."

"People see themselves as recipients, enforcing dependency. Some aid workers are now beginning to learn

this."

This is widespread corruption, a fact conceded by government officials, diplomats and aid workers.

"This is a very rotten place," said Mda. "A lot of aid money ends up in someone's pocket. And of course rural communities are aware that the so-called rulers are getting all these things, sometimes at their expense."

When emotional issues are discussed the performances "can get out of hand and turn into shouting matches," Mda said.

He tries to give everyone a hearing by keeping the debate "in a theatrical form within the world of the play."

Mda, who will spend the second half of 1991 as writer in residence at Britain's Durham University, plans to take his development theatre next year to the street gangs of Cape Town.

Expo 92 will entertain Spanish-style until 4 a.m.

By Robert Hart
Reuters

SEVILLE, Spain — Expo 92, next year's World Fair in Seville, plans to entertain lavishly and in true Spanish style, with the show running nightly until 4 a.m.

When the doors close on the more than 100 national and theme pavilions which will make up the biggest-ever universal exposition, Expo's nightly mix of frivolity and fine art, cabaret and culture will open up.

In this southern Spanish city where summer temperatures frequently top 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit), relaxing far into the cool of the night is second nature.

The Expo site itself, on Cartuja Island in the Guadalquivir River will have an array of bars, restaurants, discotheques and entertainment sites open until the small hours.

More than 10,000 artists — musicians, jugglers, acrobats, mime artists — will provide street shows 18 hours a day throughout Expo's six-month run. At least 500 will be working each day.

Expo after hours will be launched every evening by a giant parade of floats and bands depicting Mediterranean cultural festivals. This will be followed by a laser and fireworks display to give the night a suitably glittering start.

Because of the night-time attractions, the organisers are offering \$10 tickets, which admit visitors to the site from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m., as well as the \$40 full-day ticket.

Alongside the razzmatazz of the street shows, bars and discos Expo has scheduled a powerful arts programme as the cultural backdrop to the world fair.

Some of the greatest names in theatre, music, dance and films will appear in 21 venues, 17 of them newly built.

"Expo 92 will offer some 18 million visitors a selection of truly universal entertainments," said Manuel Olivencia, head of the state corporation organising the fair.

"From the very highest level of classical culture to mass popular entertainment and the avant-garde there will be something to suit all tastes," local and international, elitist and popular family and adult.

Expo 92, with its theme of "The Age of Discovery," opens on April 20 and runs until Oct. 12, 1992, the 500th

anniversary of the voyage of the new world by Christopher Columbus.

With just under a year to go before the opening, the site is beginning to take on the steel and concrete shape of a futuristic city.

More than 100 pavilions are under construction, with several of the biggest nearing completion.

The main centre for art and entertainment is a man-made lake, as yet waterless, around which a string of small auditoria plus bars and restaurants are being built.

Nearby, the 7,000-seat open-air Cartuja Auditorium, the site's main theatre for plays, music and dance, is beginning to take shape.

A new opera house, the Maestranza, opened earlier this month with a gala concert by a galaxy of Spain's Opera stars headed by Tenors Placido Domingo and Jose Carreras.

Built over five years inside the decorative facade of an old artillery barracks in the heart of Seville, the modern multi-purpose theatre was inspired by the Salzburg Festival.

During Expo the Maestranza will stage seven operas in Seville, starting with Bizet's *Carmen* and going on to Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and the Marriage of Figaro, Rossini's *Barber Of Seville*, Verdi's *Force Of Destiny*, Fidelio by Beethoven and La Favorita by Donizetti.

New York's Metropolitan Opera will perform Verdi's *Un Ballo In Maschera* at the Maestranza in only the second European appearance in its history.

The orchestral world will be represented by giants such as the Berlin Philharmonic under Daniel Barenboim, the Leningrad Philharmonic conducted by Yuri Temirkanov and the Philadelphia Orchestra under Riccardo Muti.

Jazz and pop music will be part of the nightly diet on the Expo site with formal concerts once or twice a month. Theatregoers will see plays directed by Swedish master Ingmar Bergman and Briton's Peter Brook and productions mounted by the Berliner Ensemble and London's National Theatre.

The New Central Theatre on the Expo site will be dedicated entirely to new and avant-garde productions. Actors Dustin Hoffman, Vittorio Gassman and actor-playwright Dario Fo will give dramatic monologues at Seville's classical Lope De Vega Theatre.

Caribbean comic brings audiences home

By Max de Lotbiniere

LONDON — Oliver Samuels, Jamaica's leading comedy actor, is back in the United Kingdom and his fans are celebrating. Even in the long history of the venerable Hackney Empire, the ornate Victorian music hall in East London where he opened his show, few actors could have commanded such an ecstatic response from their audiences as Samuels. He enters centre stage — the setting is a dowdy Jamaican shipping company in his new comedy, "we run tings" (We Run Things), and the members of the audience are immediately out of their seats cheering, clapping and whooping. Far from being put off his stride, this is the kind of response Oliver Samuels has come to expect whether he's on stage in Kingston, New York, Vancouver or Birmingham.

Back in Jamaica, Samuels' television series, *Oliver at Large*, has outpulled even *The Cosby Show*, the internationally successful U.S. comedy export, and when he returns from his present European tour he'll be busy making another 28-episode series. But fans around the world have to make do with videocassettes of his shows. For a whole generation of Jamaicans who came to the U.K. to live and work, the chance to see Samuels perform live is like being transported — if only for an evening — from the cold, rainy daily English routine to the

warmth and humour of Jamaica.

For those in the audience who are new to Jamaican comedy, the experience is not so much culture shock as cultural full frontal assault. In this latest production Samuels plays Stanman, a long-time employee of We Run Tings import/export Inc., which it soon transpires, has a serious efficiency problem. The boss, Mr. Perkins — played by Samuels' long-time acting partner Volier Maffie Johnson — has plans to change things but nothing is going to upset Stanman's routine. In structure the play is classic farce, but the conflicts between the characters, which are the basis for the comedy, are classic Jamaican. Stanman, who is not about to have his easy life disrupted, gets the upper hand once he finds out who in the office has been sleeping with whom.

If French has been called the language of love, then Jamaican dialect must be the language of verbal combat. Once the polite veneer is cracked (and Stanman's is very thin), it is down to no-holds-barred wrestling with words as the male and female employees of the company go at each other. The show is fast, loud and raw, and although sex and greed insist on raising their heads, they would be much better off taking cover from the cross-fire. With each near-fatal blow the audience goes wild with delight. Stout matrons



Oliver Samuels

seem on the verge of collapse and grown men are doubled up with laughter as Stanman proceeds with his lethal delivery.

It is a relief to discover, on meeting Oliver Samuels after opening night, that the character of Stanman is brought to life for the play and the play only. In a relaxed mood the following morning, Samuels slouches in a comfortable armchair. He is 43 and has a large, round belly that gets an affectionate stroke as he laughs. One thing that Samuels is not is a

man who has let international success go to his head. "I'm a very ordinary person," he says. "The popularity hasn't come with a lot of money, so basically people don't see me as a great person who is 'up there' and untouchable."

In a place like Jamaica, where no one is allowed to remain aloof from the community and where stardom could be a strain on someone as well known as he is, Samuels believes he has the right attitude. "It is when you make yourself inaccessible that people get too interested

in you. I live the best way I know," he says. "I don't wear a lot of gold or fancy clothes. I don't go for that star image." He is a simple man but also cautious. "I have this fear," he explains. "That you have to maintain the image, but in the theatre world you can't maintain it, acting is a very ungrateful profession," he added.

Samuels' awareness of how fleeting success can be might have something to do with the financial hardship of growing up on a plantation in the north of Jamaica. His parents — his father was a casual labourer and his mother a vendor — taught him never to be victimised by his poverty. They also instilled in him the confidence that if he worked hard enough he would achieve success. It was as a young boy that he set himself his goal for life.

"I believe I have always wanted to be an actor," says Samuels. "It comes out of my very youthful experience of the plantation. People never had access to electronic media like television. Instead, there was a kind of 'yard theatre': People performing in their homes for their neighbours. It obviously impressed me, but what really fascinated me was the magic of the silver screen. When I was around eight years old, my mother gave me a gift, 6 cents, and said I could go to the cinema the next Saturday night to see a Tarzan movie."

"It was raining in the film," he recalls. "And I got the nice feeling of rain falling on the zinc roof — the movie house had a zinc roof. But when I got outside I was astonished. It was dry, and my brother had to explain to me that it was only raining in the film." In spite of this early inspiration from cinema, film is about the only media Samuels has yet to conquer, but whether he is performing in the theatre, radio or television he tries to cast that same kind of magic over his audiences.

From performing in yard theatre and in school productions Samuels gained a place at the Jamaican School of Drama in the early 1970s. He is modest about that achievement but the experience means a great deal to him. Although the coursework exposed him to classical theatre, it was principally aimed at the West Indian theatre tradition. "The original tutor at the school," Samuels explains, "came with the idea that what we need is a Caribbean theatre. So we were exposed to West Indian writers and performed West Indian and U.K. plays."

Since then his idol has been the Jamaican folklorist and poet, Louise Bennett-Coverley, a great champion of Jamaican culture and language. When he is reminded of a remark he is quoted as making during his last trip to the U.K., Samuels lets out a long laugh and shakes his head.

King recuperating

(Continued from page 1)

health. Multitudes of Jordanians thronged Al Hussein Medical City in Amman over the past two days expressing their best wishes for the King's speedy recovery and pleading to visit him.

Cardiologist Youssef Qousus who is supervising King Hussein's treatment prevented all visits, however.

One of the King's supervising doctors said on Wednesday that King Hussein's heart "was 100 per cent okay, while the atrial fibrillation was not dangerous and had no repercussions on him."

He said the King was responding very well to medication.

King Hussein, who regularly sees a cardiologist in London, said he has suffered from the same ailment several times.

Doctors and other official sources said the main reason for the current bout of irregular heartbeat was fatigue after two days of state functions, including

the Army Day holiday, in which he shook hands with thousands of people.

A senior Royal Palace official said doctors reported after two days of diagnosis that the King suffered "atrial fibrillation," a medical term for rapid, uncoordinated series of contractions of some portion of the heart muscle, which causes irregular heartbeat.

The palace official, who spoke on condition he not be identified, said King Hussein "will be discharged from hospital within 48 hours."

"Doctors are concerned to keep His Majesty in a quiet, peaceful and relaxing atmosphere and most importantly away from work," the official said in response to earlier reports that the King was scheduled to leave hospital Wednesday.

In an interview broadcast Tuesday on Jordan Radio, King Hussein told citizens from his sickbed that "within a short period of time, we shall go back again to resume our work, God willing."

Israel must quit S. Lebanon

(Continued from page 1)

south Lebanon three times last week, killing 19 people and wounding 49.

Crocker, speaking after talks with Education Minister Boutros Harb, said Washington backed a peace drive in Lebanon after 16 years of civil war.

The government is re-establishing control across the country in line with an Arab-brokered pact reached in 1989 in the Saudi city of Taif.

"We think that the Lebanese government will have the chance to extend its authority on all Lebanese territory including the south, as the Taif pact stipulated," Crocker said.

In Tel Aviv, meanwhile, Shamir urged the United States also Wednesday not to let its opposition to Jewish settlements influence decisions to grant aid to help house Israel's wave of Soviet immigration.

The statement was in response to radio and newspaper reports here that President Bush has warned American Jewish leaders that Washington might withhold loan guarantees for the Soviets unless Israel stops moving Jews to the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The United States has repeatedly criticised Israel's settlement policy as an impediment to peace.

Asked about Bush's reported remarks, Shamir told reporters: "The United States has contributed much to the coming of this immigration, and I really hope that no political issues will prevent the United States from giving its large part to the assimilation of this great and blessed immigration."

Shamir also said that "it is inconceivable that the United States, our great friend, will change its ways and will not help Israel in the absorption of the immigrants."

Avi Pazner, an aide to Shamir, confirmed that Bush restated objections to settlement construction in the occupied territories. But he denied loan guarantees were threatened.

Israel has moved more than 100,000 Jewish settlers into the territories, and Housing Minister Ariel Sharon has pledged to add 50,000 more over the next two years.

6 political activists detained

(Continued from page 1)

identity card, on the back page, which contained insults to the person of the prime minister and his family. A copy of the pamphlet made available to the Jordan Times did not indicate any sign of the identity of its writers. The pamphlet attacks the government accusing it of reverting to pro-American policies following the Gulf war.

The JCP "revolutionary path," has been critical of some government policies as well as of other left-wing political groups which some members of the group felt that they had abandoned their principles.

"We do not mind their views but they have penetrated the ceiling of democracy by using personal slander," one security official maintained.

The wives of the suspects strongly denied the charges. "Issam would not resort to slander," Mrs. Hana Al Tal told the Jordan Times. "This is not his way of expressing his views."

The security forces have allowed the families of the detainees, held at the General Intelligence Department, to visit them on Tuesday. Later they told the Jordan Times that the detainees looked in good condition.

"Issam looked fine as far as I could tell," said Mrs. Tal who saw him after an interrogation session.

Security officials insisted that they were not violating the law by detaining the suspects for interrogation. "We have the right to detain suspects for interrogation for two weeks before referring them to court," said one security source, who like other sources, insisted on anonymity.

A prominent Jordanian lawyer supported the security officials' statements.

But the wives countered that the way the arrests were made were reminiscent of the pre-democratisation era. "My little girl was so terrified that she became hysterical," I had to take her to a doctor who put her on sedatives," said Mrs. Smeirat, a

Tunisian national, whose husband Dr. Youssef Smeirat was detained.

Nadia Hallaseh, sister of another detainee, Walid Hallaseh, said that her brother was picked up by the security from his hotel room in Aqaba.

The lawyer who spoke to the Jordan Times said that the method used to make the arrest, as described by the families, "was wrong."

The security sources insisted that they had an arrest warrant from the attorney general to arrest the suspects and search their homes. According to the lawyer, martial law, which has not been lifted yet, gives specific senior intelligence officers the authority of an attorney general.

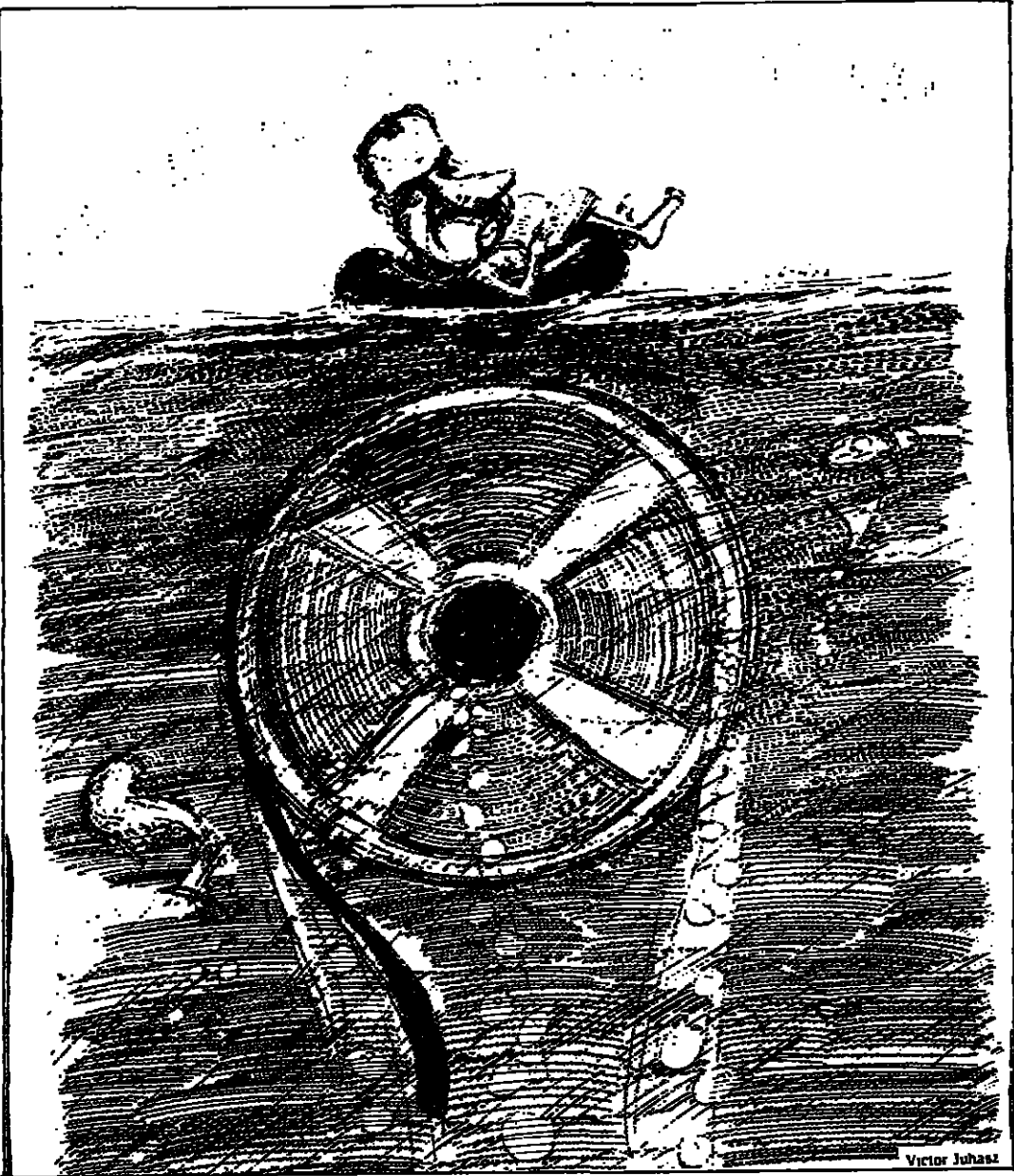
Mrs. Tal said that she was too shocked that she forgot to ask the security for the arrest warrant. Mrs. Tal and the wife of another detainee — Dr. Nayef Attar — described the pattern of the arrests and termed it as "rough."

The security sources resented the accusations stressing that the way the arrests were made did not contravene the law.

One security source said that the group has been involved in violent incidents in the past. "They were involved in starting violence in Baqaa refugee camp on more than one occasion," the source said, adding that the JCP "revolutionary path" believes in revolutionary violence.

The security sources believe that the group was behind burning tyres during pro-Iraqi and pro-Palestinian infitadah demonstrations in the camp. There was no way of getting the group's reaction.

Deputy Kassar, however, said that regardless of the charges, as a deputy, he rejected the principle of arresting activists without substantial evidence. "In the era of democratisation we have to deal with the people on the basis that a suspect is innocent until proved guilty and not vice versa."



Parents meet prime minister

(Continued from page 1)

However, the two more important and controversial issues have been comments attributed to the minister allegedly criticising the King's ten-year "plan of action for educational reform (1989-1998)," and plans to ban or limit coeducation in schools around the country.

Fatima Kabariti, a mother who also met with the premier, said that the delegation ended their meeting with Mr. Badran "feeling very comfortable with the whole idea of democratic lobbying and dialogue."

"The prime minister praised the dialogue that was created over this issue saying that this is a manifestation of democracy and falls in line with the constitution, the National Charter and His Majesty King Hussein's speeches on the day the charter was ratified," Mrs. Kabariti told the Jordan Times.

"What we really wanted is the right to choose," she explained adding that "we do not want to impose our opinions on anybody. We want dialogue and we want to be sure that no one can impose their differing opinions on us."

"It is the right of mothers and fathers and the different sectors of society to participate in the decision-making process before a decision is adopted and is applied," Mr. Bitar pointed out.

He added that in the meeting with the prime minister

"we stressed our social reality as we saw it and the right of parents to choose."

"We are an open society, free from extremism and bigotry. This society has freedoms that are protected by the constitution," Mr. Bitar added.

"We want to tell everyone that we have all the respect for the opinions that differ with us and in return we want our opinions to be respected," Mrs. Kabariti said.

Mr. Bitar said that the representatives of private schools and the parents of students who attend them "are shouldering a heavy burden that the government would otherwise have to shoulder itself."

"These schools take as many as 20 per cent of the student body in the country, if these schools did not exist the government would have to provide for these students," Mr. Bitar said.

In the final analysis, Mr. Bitar said, "we are not against one group or another, we have an opinion and we are concerned that no one group, even if it represented the majority of the people, would use mental terror and oppression."

No official government spokesmen were available to comment, but the concerned parents said they would be following up on the meeting with the prime minister to see what progress could be made on resolving the controversial issues.

Aziz in Ankara

(Continued from page 1)

Foreign Minister Ahmet Kurtcebe Alptemecin, welcoming Aziz, said Turkey wanted to get first-hand information on developments in Iraq and assess its policy in the light of U.N. resolutions.

"We certainly desire that Iraq solves its problems, that the people of Iraq live in peace and stability, and that Iraq initiates good relations with regional

countries," he added. Turkey was deluged with half a million mainly Kurdish refugees from Iraq after Iraqi troops crushed a short-lived Kurdish uprising in March.

All but 12,000 have returned to an allied-held safety zone in northern Iraq. Turkey also hosts up to 8,000 Iraqis who fled across the border earlier on in the Gulf crisis and 27,000 Kurds who arrived in 1988 to escape Iraqi repression.

Jordan Times
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ADABA - JORDAN

Jordan hosts qualifying matches Davis Cup events start

By Maha Adadi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — For the second consecutive year the Jordan Tennis Federation is hosting and participating in the Davis Cup qualifying matches which start Thursday at the Al Hussein Sports City.

This year the Jordanian four-man team will be facing the Pakistani team of professional tennis players for the first time in Jordan, and both sides seem keen for the confrontation.

The number one Jordanian player, Hani Al-Ali who will be representing Jordan in an international tournament for the sixth

time, Thursday said that considering the fact that the Jordanian players are amateurs they are looking forward to playing against the Pakistani Team. "Participating in this tournament is an opportunity to gain experience. When we play against professionals we become more aware of our weak points and learn to overcome them for other tournaments," Mr. Al-Ali said.

At a press conference at the Intercontinental Hotel, Wednesday the international referee who is a representative from the International Tennis Federation (ITF) Michel Willems said that he hoped the qualifying matches would impress the spectators.

"I hope that the competition will be strong and that the teams put on a good show," Mr. Willems said.

The captain of the Pakistani team, Syed Mahmood Alam said that the team was well-prepared for the event. "The Pakistani team members have practiced three hours daily for the past month at a tennis camp in Islamabad, and they are in good shape physically and also in good practice," he said, adding that he was concerned mainly because the Pakistani team had practiced on grass-courts but will be playing the matches on hard courts.

The Jordanian team is made up of Hani Al-Ali, Saleh Bushnaq,

Emad Abu Hamda and Ayman Abu Jaber. The Pakistani team includes Rashid Malik, Hameed Al-Haq, Mushaf Zia and Omar Rashid.

The Davis Cup is considered "the jewel in the ITF crown." The first Davis Cup match took place at the turn of the century when Dwight Filley Davis then a student at Harvard University, put up a trophy for competition between tennis players in the United States and the British Isles. Since then, it has become one of the largest and most prestigious team event in world sport. Today 87 nations, representing every continent participate in the event.



Hani Al Ali

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Chang wins, Wilander loses on grass

LONDON (AP) — Michael Chang and Mats Wilander, two players who have triumphed on the red clay of the French Open, both tested the grass of Queens Club Tuesday with starkly different results. While American Chang overcame a 0-3 deficit to beat Britain's Danny Sapsford 6-3, 6-3 and become the first player into the third round, Sweden's Wilander tumbled 6-4, 6-4 in the opening round to Germany's Patrik Kuhnen. He also picked up a muscle injury. The top three seeds in the tournament, world no. 1 Stefan Edberg, no. 3 Ivan Lendl and U.S. open titlist Pete Sampras, play their first singles games of the tournament Wednesday. Chang, seeded fourth in this \$500,000 pre-Wimbledon tournament, won the French Open in 1989 at age 17. Wilander, who also won at Roland Garros as a 17-year-old in 1982, is a comparative veteran at 26. Both hit problems when they tried to translate their baseline game to the faster grass courts.

Compulsory blood tests possible for Olympics

BIRMINGHAM, England (R) — Compulsory blood tests to detect doping in the Olympics could be introduced at the 1996 Atlanta games, Olympic officials indicated Tuesday. The chairman of the medical commission of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Prince Alexandre De Merode of Belgium, said he believed the IOC would proceed with plans to conduct compulsory blood tests as well as the present urine analysis. He did not specify a date for the implementation of the proposals but said he believed a study of all the implications of blood testing would be completed by next year. However, IOC information director Michele Verdier gave a pointer towards the 1996 Atlanta games when she told a news conference: "If a decision is taken before the end of 1991 it would apply only to games held after 1992. An IOC study into the possible introduction of blood tests was first announced in April when Verdier said doctors had indicated that urine analysis might be inadequate to detect certain drugs.

El Salvador squad beats Juventus

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Goalie Carlos Rivera made his team's fourth penalty kick, then stopped a Juventus penalty kick as El Salvador's Luis Angel Firpo defeated the Italian squad 1-0 Tuesday night. The two teams played to a scoreless tie before about 10,000 people at the coliseum forcing the penalty kicks. El Salvador's Fernando de Moura scored the first penalty kick for his team, but Juventus' Paolo Di Canio answered. Luis Guelmo's penalty kick got past Juventus goalie Stefano Tacconi, giving the El Salvador team a 2-1 edge. Juventus' Giancarlo Marocchi then shot over the crossbar. Luis Angel Firpo was successful on his next attempt, as was Juventus. Rivera scored what proved to be the clinching penalty kick with a shot that flew past Tacconi into the right corner. He then ended the game with a save of Roberto Galia's shot. Juventus is on a three-game tour of North America. On Sunday, the team played the United States national team a scoreless tie in New Haven, Connecticut. The Italian club travels to Leon, Mexico, to play a Mexican team Friday. Eight members of the Juventus squad are on Italy's national team, including Tacconi.

The Davis Cup Schedule of matches to be held in the central court at Al Hussein Sports City.

Thursday June 13

2.30 p.m.: Opening ceremony under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor.

2.45 p.m.: First singles match between Hani Al Ali and Hameed Al Haq.
Second singles match between Emad Abu Hamda and Rashid Malek

Friday June 14

2.30 p.m.: Doubles match Hani Al Ali and Saleh Bushnaq against Rashid Malek and Hameed Al Haq

Saturday June 15

11.30 a.m.: Singles match between Hani Al Ali (number one on the Jordanian team) and Rashid Malik (number one on the Pakistani team)
2.00 p.m.: Last match. Singles match between Emad Abu Hamda and Hamid Al Haq.

Magic Johnson might consider retirement

INGLEWOOD, California (AP) — The disappointment of a 3-1 deficit in the NBA finals has Magic Johnson thinking he might consider retirement after the series.

"I have three weeks off after this is over and I'll sit down and decide what to do," Johnson said after the Los Angeles Lakers' practice Tuesday. "I might decide to leave after this season, or it might be one or two more years. I always wanted to be a businessman, although I'm set up financially so I don't have to work another day in my life."

Johnson, 31, said he never expected what he called the "ultimate series" between the Lakers and Chicago Bulls would become so one-sided. The Bulls have a chance to win the first championship in the franchise's 25-year history with another victory at the forum Wednesday night. "There becomes a point when you say, 'I think I'm tired of traveling. I'm tired of giving things up,'" Johnson said. "You always wonder how much longer you want to go, even if you're not really thinking of quitting."

"Ultimately, I'll do what's best for me, not what's best for the Lakers or the NBA. If I thought in my heart that we had no legitimate chance to win, I'd be more inclined to quit."

The Lakers, who have won five

championships since Johnson's arrival in 1979-80, got no encouraging news on the injury front Tuesday.

Coach Mike Dunleavy, who said he wasn't counting on injured starters James Worthy and Byron Scott, scrimmaged with the team because he wanted Johnson to rest, too. That left nine players on the floor.

"I made a few baskets, but our bench has guys who are better than me," said Dunleavy, 37, who retired as an active player in 1985 but filled in as an emergency reserve for Milwaukee as recently as last season.

"We have to prepare like James and Byron are not going to play," Johnson said.

In the 1980 finals against Philadelphia, Johnson moved to center in game 6 and had 42 points and 15 rebounds as the Lakers beat the 76ers and won the championship despite an injury to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

"This is a similar situation, but I don't know what's going to happen and how I might play in the game," Johnson said. "I can't go into a game saying, 'I'm just going to shoot tonight.' You can't plan things that way. I have to see how the game goes."

Asked if he would play the entire game, Johnson replied, "I don't think I'll play 48 minutes, but it will be close to that."

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY JUNE 14, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Those people who have been dealing with who have big ideas with the ability to reduce them to a properly working expression may become more dependent on your leadership soon.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Don't rely upon your hunches today but make a point to carefully and logically think out just what you would like to have and how to get it.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Partners can be a problem and trouble follows any disagreement with them but attending to financial matters brings you much more security.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Your new outlets of a personal nature are just great now so steer clear of that project that bores and get out and be social as soon as you can.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Your secret efforts to get what you want can produce fine results so don't just be off playing but concentrate on using your talents.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Stick to those who have been friends, repay obligations of a personal nature and sidestep that annoying problem at home that needs to be worked out.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Let those you like be more aware of your need for some vocational outlet by which to express yourself instead of those usual routines.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October

22) New ideas of all kinds are just great for you but avoid that instinct to spend more than you can afford or spend all of your time on some pleasures.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Take some time out to forget those personal aims that mean so much to you and do what your mate and other partners expect of you at this time.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You now have it in your power to show you are the one who will listen to what others have to say instead of trying to uncover errors by yourself.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) This is the moment for you to show you are a good worker and can keep at your job despite friends trying to get you off on some jaunt.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Your interest in having a good time is ok now so avoid that influential person connected with a project that expects a great deal of you.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You find it is pretty important that you do open up some subject at home that can make conditions there much more as you wish so consult with him.

Today's child: If your child were born today she or he will be able to organize conditions brilliantly to their benefit. This emotional progeny will need to fight a need to feel martyred if they find obstacles in their path.

"The stars impel, they do not compel." What you make of your life is largely up to you.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY JUNE 13, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: You may find that everyone your in contact with is very articulate about stating what they like or dislike but don't let it upset you as most of it is rambling just for the sake of hearing themselves.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Look at your property and see what you can do to improve it and increase its value as well as get some new ideas for adding to your present abundance.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) This is not day for you to force you will upon others which you will be very much tempted to do but instead charm, do something nice for friends.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Now you are in the mood to change your societies so that you can find the solution to them and have them out of the way once and for all.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) A day when you find that you need to go after your personal desires alone instead of expecting friends to help you to get them.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You want to take some chances with your reputation or good name but certainly this is no time to do so and you could rue it very much at a later date.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You have many new ideas you

would like to go right after now and yet there could be so many disappointments, connected with doing so now.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Neglect not to carry out in specific detailed manner whatever you have promised anyone else that you would do and save yourself considerable annoyance.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) There are some points of tension between you and some allies and if you wish to prevent a pretty unpleasant situation, you'd better chill out.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You find that whatever projects you do you are apt to have some pretty unpleasant conditions so make a point to proceed alone and calmly.

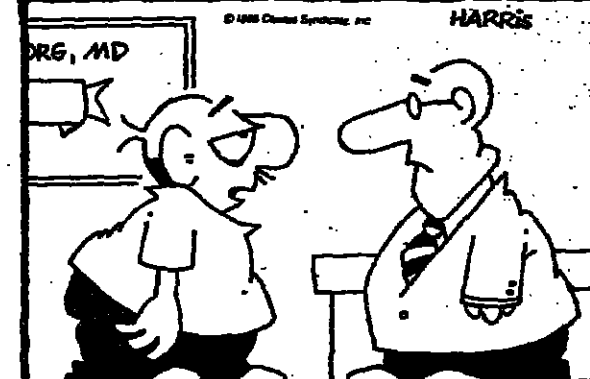
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Make sure that you do what you have found agreeable for sometime past instead of cultivating some unreliable person with little substance.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) This is your time to do what you have agreed in minute detail as forget those many little digs you now like to give others you respect.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You have to use care or there is some possibility of an accident while in motion in some way so guard yourself while walking or driving.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



"I'm starting to look old. I want you to give me a face transplant."

JUMBLE.

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: OOOO — OOOO OF OOOO!

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumble: CHEEK HUSKY SUPERB EXCISE

Answer: What a lamb might become as he grows older — SHEEPISH

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
AND TANNAN HIRSCH
© 1991 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—As South, vulnerable, you hold:

♠ 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 ♠ 7652

The bidding has proceeded:

North East South West

1 Pass 1 NT Pass

2 Pass ?

What action do you take?

A.—One of the requirements for a reverse bid is that the first suit is longer than the second. As responder, it is your duty to see that you play in the combined longest suit, and you know that's hearts. Therefore, it is incumbent on you to take a preference to three hearts.

Q.2—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 ♠ 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

The bidding has proceeded:

South West North East

1 Pass 1 NT Pass

2 Pass 2 ♠ Pass

What action do you take?

A.—Responder's change of suit would be forcing even if it wasn't a reverse. You can't bid no trump without a stopper in the unbid suit and you don't want to take preference to hearts with only a doubleton honor. You have a good six-card suit, so stick to your story. Bid three diamonds.

Q.3—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 ♠ 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

The bidding has proceeded:

South West North East

1 Pass 1 NT Pass

2 Pass 2 ♠ Pass

What action do you take?

A.—You have a minimum, balanced hand, so there's no reason why you should want to bid again. To bid two diamonds just because you have a fair five-card suit accomplishes nothing and could be fraught with danger. Pass.

Q.4—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 ♠ 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

The bidding has proceeded:

South West North East

1 Pass 1 NT Pass

2 Pass 2 ♠ Pass

What do you bid now?

A.—To bid one no trump with no guard in either unbid suit is folly, and to rebid your clubs and suppress such excellent heart support could result in a missed game. We would have no qualms about raising to two hearts—three good trumps and a ruffing value are more than enough.

Q.5—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 ♠ 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

The bidding has proceeded:

South West North East

1 Pass 1 NT Pass

2 Pass 2 ♠ Pass

What do you bid now?

A.—You have game-going values, but the balanced nature of your hand means that your side's combined assets might not stretch to 11 tricks. We suggest that you probe for a no trump game by showing your heart stopper now by bidding two hearts. Should partner raise or return to spades, show your club support. Should partner confirm a diamond stopper by bidding no trump, proceed to the no trump game.

Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 ♠ 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

The bidding has proceeded:

South West North East

1 Pass 1 NT Pass

2 Pass 2 ♠ Pass

What do you bid now?

A.—You have game-going values, but the balanced nature of your hand means that your side's combined assets might not stretch to 11 tricks. We suggest that you probe for a no trump game by showing your heart stopper now by bidding two hearts. Should partner raise or return to spades, show your club support. Should partner confirm a diamond stopper by bidding no trump, proceed to the no trump game.

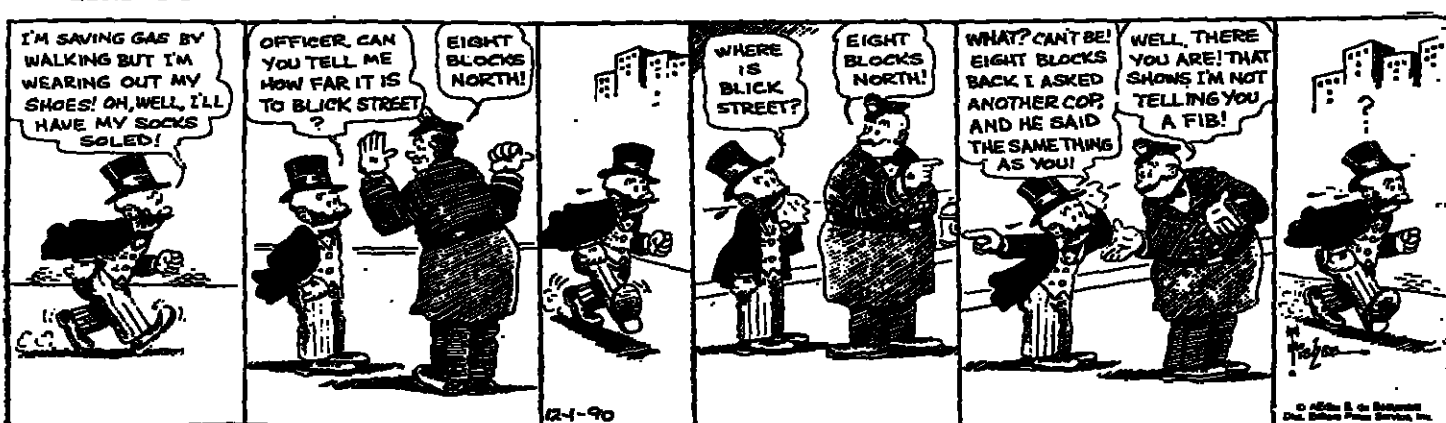
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



Economy

JORDAN TIMES, THURSDAY-FRIDAY, JUNE 13-14, 1991 7

Financial Markets

Jordan Times
in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close June 12, 1991	Tokyo Close June 12, 1991
Sterling Pound	1.6569	1.6572
Deutsche Mark	1.7744	1.7750
Swiss Franc	1.5765	1.5757
French Franc	6.0150	6.0115**
Japanese Yen	141.54	141.50
European Currency Unit	1.1595	1.1600**

1SD Per STD
* European Opening at 8:00 a.m. GMT

Eurocurrency Interest Rates Date: 12/6/1991

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	10.00	9.93	9.87	9.81
Sterling Pound	11.75	11.00	10.75	10.65
Deutsche Mark	8.51	8.93	9.30	9.02
Swiss Franc	7.75	7.75	7.75	7.68
French Franc	9.02	9.52	9.50	9.43
Japanese Yen	7.35	7.78	7.71	7.53
European Currency Unit	8.12	8.12	8.57	8.57

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. \$100,000 or equivalent.

Precious Metals Date: 12/6/1991

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	369.85	7.00	Silver	4.47	.10

* 21 Karat

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 12/6/1991

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	.685	.687
Sterling Pound	1.1341	1.1395
Deutsche Mark	.3857	.3876
Swiss Franc	.4515	.4538
French Franc	.1137	.1143
Japanese Yen	.4632	.4656
Dutch Guilder	.3423	.3440
Swedish Krona	.1073	.1079
Italian Lira*	.0519	.0522
Belgian Franc	.01577	.01586

* Per 100

Other Currencies Date: 12/6/1991

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7860	1.8200
Lebanese Lira*	.074	.076
Saudi Riyal	.1820	.1830
Kuwaiti Dinar	-	-
Qatari Riyal	.1846	.1855
Egyptian Pound	.2100	.1900
Omani Riyal	1.7660	1.7470
UAE Dirham	.1846	.1855
Greek Drachma*	.3400	.3600
Cypriot Pound	1.4000	1.4200

* Per 100

CAR Indices for Amman Financial Market

Index	9/6/1991 Close	11/6/1991 Close
All-Share	111.66	111.82
Banking Sector	107.71	107.54
Insurance Sector	113.31	113.72
Industry Sector	115.16	115.73
Services Sector	130.18	131.03

December 31, 1990 = 100

U.S. thrift regulator raises bailout to \$200b

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. government's top regulator of the thrift industry said Tuesday that taxpayers may have to pay \$200 billion to handle the clean-up of the crippled savings and loan industry.

This was the highest estimate given yet for the bailout of the failed thrifts, or savings banks, and was \$70 billion above the worst-case scenarios of President George Bush's government.

Mr. William Seidman, chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC) which insures bank deposits, said in a television interview the \$200 billion cost did not include the interest to be paid on U.S. Treasury debt issued to finance the operation.

"It is probably going to cost 200 billion in current dollars," Mr. Seidman said.

Comptroller Charles Bowsher of the General Accounting Office, the U.S.'s main fiscal auditing board, said the cost could be higher than Mr. Seidman's estimate.

"When you get through 1992, 1993 it will be about what Bill says," he said, referring to Mr. Seidman. But it could go higher if the real estate market remained depressed, Mr. Bowsher said on CNN.

The Resolution Trust Corp. (RTC), which is managing the thrift cleanup, hopes to recover part of the cost to taxpayers by selling assets, including the real estate, owned by the failed thrifts.

"That's just what I'm not sure yet — what the real estate markets are going to be like here in the next two or three years. So I feel it could go a little higher than what Bill has just said," Bowsher said.



William Seidman

Bowsher said earlier that the weak economy is likely to push the cost of the savings and loan bailout to billions of dollars more than earlier estimates by the Bush administration.

He said taxpayers could spend at least \$150 billion to protect the federally insured deposits of failed savings banks by the end of next year, well above the administration's earlier worst-case estimate of \$130 billion.

"You are looking at (about) \$150 billion through 1992," Mr. Bowsher told the Senate Banking Committee.

The RTC has already received \$80 billion for the job and Mr. Bowsher estimated that the agency will need another \$50 billion to \$75 billion to carry it through next year.

"The message I have to deliver this morning related to RTC future funding needs is not a good one," Mr. Bowsher said. "Due to the current economic recession, we are seeing a slow but steady increase in the number of institutions with negative earnings and

negative or low capital."

Mr. Bowsher criticized the RTC for inadequate management of the thrift assets it holds.

"It's going to be very, very difficult to go back to the Senate and ask for another \$50 billion," said Senate Banking Committee Chairman Donald Riegle, a Michigan Democrat.

The estimated taxpayer costs of the savings and loan bailout do not include another \$6 billion that Mr. Bowsher said the RTC will lose on its use of borrowed money for working capital.

Federal bank regulators have said that the recession and failed property loans eroded U.S. bank profits during the first quarter this year, and more banks may fail over the next two years than had been expected.

The FDIC said bank profits fell nearly nine per cent in the first quarter of 1991 to \$5.7 billion from \$6.2 billion in the first quarter of 1990.

"We simply have not seen a recovery yet that is affecting the banking industry," Mr. Seidman told a news conference. "It looks like the banks are simply going to reflect the fact that the recovery... isn't coming quite as quickly as we might have hoped."

"These numbers would confirm that we're moving off the baseline forecast, closer to the pessimistic forecast," Mr. Seidman said.

The FDIC said as many as 440 banks could fail over the next two years, compared with 169 last year. Originally, the agency estimated about 340 bank failures.

Despite the decline, U.S. banks did better in the first quarter than they did during the last three months of 1990, when they earned a meagre \$1.1 billion.

Japan's trade surplus rises 35%

TOKYO (R) — Japan's export machine shrugged off the effects of a weak U.S. economy in May and instead drove Tokyo's trade surplus up 35 per cent, the fifth monthly increase in a row.

The customs-cleared surplus climbed to an unadjusted \$4.18 billion last month from a revised \$3.09 billion a year earlier, the Ministry of Finance (MOF) said Wednesday.

Economists said the data provided solid evidence Japan's trade surplus was on a strong widening trend and that increased trade friction would be the likely result.

"The surplus has grown to the point where it is no longer an issue just for economists, it has become one for statesmen," said Mr. Paul Summerville, economist at the Tokyo branch of Jardine Fleming Securities Ltd.

An MOF official attempted to put a good face on the data, telling reporters that although the surplus is growing, long term forces may yet narrow the gap.

The surplus with the United States, Tokyo's most outspoken trade critic, declined 20 per cent to \$1.95 billion, the report said. But the numbers were not otherwise encouraging for

Japanese government officials who will have to parry responses from trading partners.

The export-import gap with the European Community (EC), for example, rose a whopping 78.3 per cent to \$2.14 billion.

Economists said strong demand in Europe for Japanese consumer goods at the same time that Japanese are cutting back their purchases of expensive European art and cars explained the increase.

Exports to the EC climbed 19.4 per cent to \$4.87 billion while imports declined 5.2 per cent to \$2.75 billion.

Japan's trade overhang among its fellow Asian nations increased 42.7 per cent as Tokyo continued a recent trend toward churning out machine tools and plant equipment.

Overall exports of general machinery surged 20.4 per cent to \$5.67 billion while exports of electrical machinery climbed 14.6 per cent. Economists said a good share of those exports found their way to other Asian ports.

"These numbers confirm that Japan has diversified its economic risk away from North America," said Mr. Summerville. "But Tokyo is going to find itself in the

hot seat at the upcoming G-7 meeting, defending its trade surplus yet again."

Overall exports climbed 13.3 per cent in May to \$24.41 billion, largely on the back of the demand for Japanese goods from Asia and Europe and a stronger yen.

The yen's muscle compared with last year has had a double impact on exports. First, a weak Japanese currency six months ago helped increase the volume of goods contracted for then, but only now being delivered.

Second, the relatively strong yen is inflating the value of exports when they are figured in dollar terms.

The average exchange rate for exports was 137.79 yen to the dollar against 156.86 a year earlier.

Iran to raise oil production to 5m barrels a day by '93

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian Oil Minister Gholamreza Aqazadeh has said his country would raise its oil output from 3.5 million barrels per day to five million by 1993.

Mr. Aqazadeh told the Middle East Economy Survey (MEES) in an interview that plans were under way to modernise oil terminals and offshore platforms damaged in the 1980-88 war with Iraq.

"Before the war our production capacity was more than five million barrels per day. Considerable damage was inflicted on our oil production and export facilities. Also during the war we were not able to carry out the necessary drilling in the fields," he told the industry newsletter.

He said he had parliament's approval to seek foreign funds and expertise to restore the country's crude output to what it was before the 1980-88 war with Iraq. Large-scale drilling and gas injection projects were needed to boost capacity.

"The Iranian parliament has already approved these plans and

allocated the necessary funds, both in terms of foreign exchange and local expenditure. So there is no problem about that," Mr. Aqazadeh told the authoritative industry newsletter.

He said Iran had put into operation 18 new drilling rigs in the southern fields, bringing the number of active rigs to 30. The country was leasing some rigs from Canada, "but we are doing the rest of the drilling ourselves," the minister said.

Japanese and European firms were repairing offshore platforms. "But on the onshore fields we are relying on our own capacity and expertise to carry out the work involved in respect of drilling, gas injection and other projects."

He said damage from the Iraq war had reduced the capacity of offshore to 250,000-270,000 barrels per day from 600,000-700,000 before the war.

Mr. Aqazadeh said Iran was talking to U.S. oil firms about the direct sale of crude to the United States following a recent decision by Washington to lift a ban on

such imports from Iran.

"Apart from our ban on oil sales to Israel or South Africa, our policy over the past 10 years has been to have oil dealings with all countries and all companies. There are no restrictions in this regard," he was quoted as saying.

The minister said Iran was keen to create a climate of confidence between producers and consumers for the 1990s and the first decade of the next century.

Mr. Aqazadeh said France, Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Turkey and Bulgaria had expressed interest in obtaining gas through a planned gas pipeline through Turkey to Europe. The pipeline will have a capacity of three billion cubic feet per day.

Iran was negotiating with international firms to invest in joint gas and oil ventures.

These included the southern oilfields in the Hormuz and the Sirri areas and the Pars gasfield near Kangan, which will eventually be producing 4.6 billion cubic feet per day, he said.

China reports success in trimming urban unemployment

BEIJING (R) — China has said the hunt for jobs for its massive army of unemployed urban workers was proving a success, though Western analysts say the country faces an unemployment time-bomb.

The urban unemployment rate, which hit 2.6 per cent at the end of 1990, was now back below two per cent, the lowest level since 1989, the official China Daily newspaper said.

"The jobless rate has returned to normal," the paper quoted a labour ministry official as saying.

The lower unemployment rate was attributed to government efforts to bail out troubled state-run enterprises with special loans and interest rate breaks.

Official unemployment statistics are unreliable, Western diplomats say. They have forecast a surge in the jobless rate when children born in the baby-boom years of the 1970s reach working age.

China's urban population is estimated at about 200 million, or about 15 per cent of the country's 1.1 billion people.

Actual urban unemployment around 20 to 30 million, while rural unemployment could top 120 million, diplomats say.

Bush grants farm credits to Soviets

WASHINGTON (R) — President George Bush has agreed to let the Soviet Union purchase up to \$1.5 billion worth of U.S. grain on credit and may now be close to a decision on whether to grant most favoured nation trade privileges to America's erstwhile adversary.

The White House announced Tuesday Bush's approval of the loan guarantees, which were requested by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

The approval commits the U.S. government to repaying private banks that provide the money to buy the grain if the Kremlin is unable to do so.

Mr. Gorbachev asked for the aid after exhausting \$1 billion in similar loan guarantees that Mr. Bush granted in December to help Moscow through the winter.

"The president's decision reflects the administration's desire to promote a continued positive evolution in the U.S.-Soviet relationship," spokesman Marlin

Fitzwater said.

He added: "We hope that this assistance will help to stabilise the food situation" in the Soviet Union.

Asked when Bush would grant the Soviets most favoured nation trade status, another step that would help Mr. Gorbachev rebuild his country's battered economy, Mr. Fitzwater said, "He is close to making a decision on that, we can't say exactly when, but relatively soon."

Mr. Bush's action on the grain credits sent a signal of support for Mr. Gorbachev. But it left open the question of whether the administration would take part in a comprehensive Western aid programme to bail out the Soviet economy.

Mr. Gorbachev is expected to meet with leaders of the world's largest industrial nations in London next month and has put pressure on them to provide an aid package to bail out his economy.

Top Soviet banker wants Western technical aid

BASLE, Switzerland (R) — The Soviet Union's top banker has said he favoured asking the West for massive technical assistance rather than loans to help revive the country's slumping economy.

Mr. Viktor Geraschenko, chairman of the state bank, also said he was sounding out Western export credit guarantee agencies about unprecedented debt rescheduling to give Moscow time to repay \$5 billion in trade debts falling due this year.

"I'm not in favour of huge

borrowing," Mr. Geraschenko told Reuters.

"Substantial technical assistance to improve our ability to use our own resources will work more wonders than direct lending," he noted.

But Mr. Geraschenko said he was not sure whether Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev shared his views.

He said some advisers to Mr. Gorbachev were telling him to request direct financial aid.

The virtual collapse of central planning, without a market system to replace it, has plunged the Soviet economy into crisis. National income dropped 12 per cent in the first quarter alone and inflation is rising.

Mr. Geraschenko said he had no choice but to print money to make up for a gaping budget deficit which has been exacerbated by the refusal of Soviet republics to provide the funds they were due to give the central government.

He said the biggest economy problem was that wage increases were outstripping gains in productivity. Unless national consensus could be reached to reform the pay structure, economic instability would continue.

Mr. Geraschenko said he was "testing the water" to see whether Western governments would consider rescheduling credits which they had guaranteed to finance exports of machinery and other goods to the Soviet Union.

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Philippine volcano hails molten rock, mud, spares U.S. base

CLARK AIR BASE, Philippines (R) — A Philippine volcano exploded Wednesday, raining a hail of molten rock and boiling mud, but sparing a nearby U.S. air base where hundreds of American servicemen scurried for their lives.

Mount Pinatubo, dormant for six centuries before initially erupting Sunday, hurled a mushroom cloud of swirling ash and choking smoke miles into the sky with the force and ominous silhouette of an atomic explosion.

Hundreds of American troops and Filipinos around Clark Air Base ran for their lives as the smoldering volcano exploded in a deadly hail of lava and boiling mud, blacking out the sun and emitting foul, sulphurous fumes.

Another, more powerful explosion could follow, officials said.

Thousands of hill tribespeople and most of the 16,000 U.S. personnel and families at Clark had already left the area.

"We saw a huge, grey mushroom-shaped cloud which billowed up in the sky overhead," said base spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Ron Rand.

"We activated the base siren. People ran for their vehicles because we did not know how much time we had," he said.

In Japan, another volcano, Mount Unzen, which killed 38 people in an eruption last week, was building up for what could be a cataclysmic explosion, officials said.

About 10,000 residents on its foothills have been evacuated.

Mount Pinatubo gave vent to a huge cloud of black ash that darkened the sky, forcing people fleeing from the volcano to drive with their headlights on at noon.

American servicemen wore scarves over their faces to keep out noxious fumes.

President Corazon Aquino flew to Clark a few hours after the explosion to visit refugee camps for thousands of displaced Aeta tribespeople.

She was warned by experts monitoring the volcano's activity that it was building up for a stronger eruption.

"Pressure is increasing dramatically," Fortunato Deoras, the deputy chief of Philippine Civil Defence, told Aquino. "That means we are about to have another eruption," he declared.

Thousands of people fled near-by Angeles City, cramming into cars and jeeps, many walked to a series of evacuation centres set up across three provinces.

Micker de Vera, a 28-year-old tribal farmer who was planting crops near the volcano despite repeated warnings to evacuate, ran bare-foot across open land to escape the eruption.

"I was on the farm, when I saw this big explosion of smoke. I saw mud flying above me, so I immediately ran for my life," he said, still panting after joining his weeping mother and sister at a church evacuation centre.

Despite the force of the blast, the eruption on the northwestern flank of Pinatubo spared the sprawling American base, which is headquarters of the U.S. 13th Air Force, and lies to the east of the volcano.

"We're all safe," Rand said by telephone.

More than 14,500 U.S. servicemen and their dependants were evacuated from Clark Monday and another 600 were withdrawn when the volcano erupted.

There were no immediate reports of casualties because almost 40,000 people, including the Americans, were evacuated from

the danger zone before Wednesday's blast.

A three-year-old boy from the Aeta tribe that lives around Pinatubo had died earlier from inhaling sulphur fumes.

Two more major explosions followed the first eruption, scientists said.

Officials expanded the danger zone to 30-kilometres from a previous 20-kilometre radius around the volcano which lies 90 kilometres northwest of the capital Manila.

The volcano erupted on the 93rd anniversary of Philippine independence from the Spanish, and was the latest in a series of natural disasters to hit the southeast Asian country of 60 million people.

Most of the servicemen and dependants at the U.S. Clark Air Base, 80 kilometres north of Manila, were evacuated Monday to the huge Subic Bay Naval Base to the west.

"Until the danger is gone, I don't think we will be doing any operations in Clark Air Base," U.S. Ambassador Nicholas Platt told reporters in Manila. "I think air operations in Clark will be down for the foreseeable future."

Clark and Subic Bay naval dockyard are the focus of protracted negotiations between Washington and Manila over the future of a U.S. military presence in the Philippines.

The talks stalled over how long the United States can stay at the two bases and how much it should pay.

Manila is offering a seven-year treaty for \$825 million. Washington wants a 10-year agreement for less. Both say they are near agreement.

Ershad sentenced to 10 years imprisonment

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — A special tribunal Wednesday convicted former President Hussain Mohammad Ershad of possessing illegal arms and sentenced him to 10 years imprisonment.

Judge Mohammad Habibullah read the 33-page verdict and concluded a four-month trial against Ershad for keeping unlicensed weapons and ammunition at his home found after he was deposed as president last December.

Ershad was given a minimum sentence of 10 years of "rigorous imprisonment," indicating that he will be denied special privileges and will be given prison labour like any other inmate.

"It's not a fair trial. I shall go to the superior courts for justice," said Ershad, looking pale after the verdict was read to a packed courtroom. "I also leave it to the people's judgement."

Ershad's lawyer Kazi Shahadat Hossain said his client will appeal within 30 days.

The former president, who is 61, also faces separate charges of alleged corruption during his eight years of leadership.

Ershad had pleaded innocent and said the charges against him were "concocted and politically motivated." He said the weapons were gifts of foreign governments — three pistols from Iraq, one from Yemen and four shotguns from various dignitaries who visited Bangladesh.

Ershad sat motionless during the reading of the verdict, but occasionally shook his head in disapproval as the judge dismissed the arguments made by his defence attorneys.

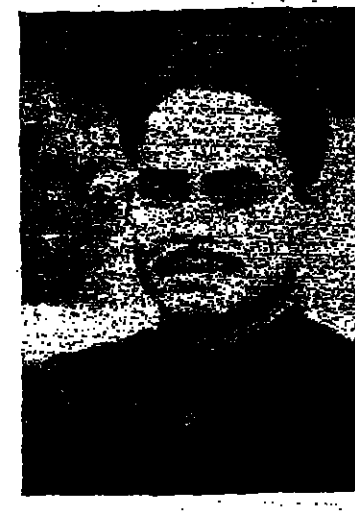
Habibullah, rejecting the allegation of political interest, said Ershad was tried under nor-

mal law and received the law's full protection. He also dismissed the notion that Ershad had immunity for his actions as president. "No citizen is above the law," he said.

About 1,000 of Ershad's supporters assembled outside the National Press Club in downtown Dhaka demanding his unconditional release. "We will break the lock of the jail and free Ershad," they chanted.

"We will peel alive the skins of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia if any harm is done to Ershad," said some of the demonstrators. Police in riot gear cordoned off the area, while a small group of anti-Ershad demonstrators approached with iron rods and sticks.

Ershad, who seized power in a 1982 coup, resigned Dec. 6 after weeks of violent clashes led by



Hussain Ershad

COLUMN

Julia Roberts puts off wedding to Kiefer Sutherland

LOS ANGELES (R) — Actor Julia Roberts, the star of "Pretty Woman," has put off her marriage to actor Kiefer Sutherland, the son of Donald Sutherland, her spokesman said.

Pat Kingsley said both Roberts and Sutherland had decided on the postponement. "It was a mutual decision," she said. The couple was to have married Friday, Roberts, 23, and Sutherland, 24, met two years ago and have been "Hollywood's hottest item" ever since. Since meeting to "stand up" in his year blockbuster summer movie "Pretty Woman," Roberts has become the highest paid actress in Hollywood. She will reportedly receive \$7 million for her new movie, "Renaissance." The actress was rushed to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles last month, where she was kept in hospital for five days with a severe case of flu. Asked whether her illness might have caused the postponement, Kingsley said you can speculate on that, but don't think so. "I really don't know what happened. I was merely told it was a mutual decision."

Abandoned fiancée gets \$25,000

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (AP) — A court has awarded \$25,000 to a woman whose fiancé refused to take the knot after promising wedding bells for an entire decade, a major TV network reported.

TV Globo said a state court in Curitiba, 845 kilometres southwest of Rio, based its decision on a section of the penal code that grants a financial settlement to the "honest" woman seduced by the promise of marriage.

Solange Machado, the eternal bride-to-be, went to court after her fiancé called on the morning of her long-awaited wedding day only to say that he would not go ahead with the ceremony.

Adding insult to injury, the groom, a doctor from the city of Foz de Iguaçu, informed the heartbroken Miss Machado that he was already married and terminated the relationship.

Machado's lawyer told TV Globo that from now on men should be careful before making any promises (about marriage). "The repercussion this case is having is going to alert many women abandoned on the eve of the ceremony," he told the network.

Snake makes suspect confess

NEW YORK (R) — A man accused of murdering three Vietnamese gang members claimed police forced him to confess by threatening to have a snake bite him and he wants the boss of the Manhattan criminal court judge Tuesday reserved decision on whether to call the slithering seven-foot-long (2.1 metre) serpent to court.

Taiwan-born David Tai, 38, charged with two others on killing three members of the Vietnamese "Born to Kill" gang, claims that the snake, Maxwell, made him confess to the slaying while being questioned by detectives last Oct. 18. Maxwell is kept as a pet in a police precinct in New York's Chinatown.

Tai's lawyer, Paul Ascher, said the law allows calling animals to court. He cited a case in which an appeals judge ruled that a horse was allowed to appear in court. Ascher said two detectives, one Chinese and the other non-Asian, forced his client to confess by threatening to "have the snake bite him on the butt" (buttocks). Ascher said Tai, who speaks limited English, was told by the Chinese detective, "I don't want to see you suffer the snake. A bite in the butt can be very painful. When Americans say things they mean them."

10 sentenced to death for selling 91 women into slavery

BEIJING (R) — A court in northern China has sentenced 10 people to death for abducting and selling 91 women into slavery, the official legal daily said Tuesday.

The court in Xinzhou City in Shanxi province sentenced 11 accomplices to death with a two-year stay of execution, the newspaper said.

The slaves were sold for 200,000 yuan (\$29,325) since it began the abduction in 1988. All the victims were sold to farmers in inner Mongolia, it said. Such reports have become increasingly common in the Chinese press. A shortage of willing brides for farmers is given as the main reason for the abductions.

Russia votes in presidency poll

MOSCOW (R) — The Russian Republic voted Wednesday in direct presidential elections that could strengthen radical leader Boris Yeltsin in his power struggle with President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Yeltsin, likely to win the first ever direct poll on promises of a national rebirth in the Soviet Union's biggest republic, looked confident as he arrived at a Moscow voting station to chants of "Yeltsin, Yeltsin" from supporters.

"I hope for victory, but of course I'm no astrologer," he told reporters at a glass-and-concrete youth centre after riding into Moscow in a black limousine from a country house.

TASS news agency reported brisk voting across the republic from Vladivostok on the Pacific coast to Kaliningrad on the Baltic.

The republic, home of 147 million of the total Soviet population of 285 million, holds the key to any future reformed Soviet state.

It holds more than three-quarters of the country's oil, gas, coal and gold, but its economy, crippled by ageing technology and poor communications, is sliding into chaos.

"Russia will not be so poor, so humiliated, so abused as it is today. It will be sovereign within the union," said Yeltsin, who broke with the Communist Party last July.

Yeltsin's closest rival, Communist-backed former Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov, attacked the Russian leader's plans for rapid moves to a market economy.

"Social tension is high," he said, arriving to vote. "If we make drastic decisions that affect people's lives there will be unpredictable consequences."

Gorbachev, hoping to forge a new union treaty with restive republics in the next few months, appeared conciliatory when asked who he thought would win. Only three months ago the two men accused each other of dictatorial ambitions.

"I am ready to cooperate with anyone the Russians elect. There will be no problems on my side on that count," said Gorbachev, who arrived to vote with his wife, Raisa, and his daughter.

"The price is too great to mix politics with personal feelings," he said, in a reference to his long personal dispute with Yeltsin.

The elections were watched closely in other republics currently backing Russia in seeking to wrest greater sovereign powers from the centre.

Vladimir Grinyov, who leads Ukrainian government negotiations by the new union treaty, said: "A Yeltsin victory will greatly strengthen the sovereignty of the republics."

"It would be difficult for the centre to resist a combination of Russia headed by a president Yeltsin and a Ukraine bent on independence," he told Reuters.

The Ukraine is the second most powerful republic. Along with Russia it is resisting Gorbachev's demand that in a future reformed Soviet Union, republican enterprises and citizens should pay some taxes directly to the centre.

A spokesman for the Yeltsin campaign headquarters said very early returns from small settlements in the far east and Siberia, which are several hours ahead of Moscow time, showed Yeltsin winning 49.85 per cent of the vote and Ryzhkov 23 per cent.

But Yeltsin is expected to marshal much greater support in the large industrial centres of western Russia, which he toured during his campaign.

Ceasefire breaks down in Rwanda

KAMPALA (R) — Rebels in the central African country of Rwanda said Wednesday they had resumed fighting with government forces after the breakdown of a ceasefire.

The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) said in a message faxed to Reuters in Uganda from Brussels that fighting with government troops had resumed in the north-west, near the Ugandan border.

A rebel spokesman also told Reuters by telephone from Brussels that the RPF had opened a new front in the eastern Kagera region near the Tanzanian border.

There was no independent confirmation of the reported fighting.

Renewed fighting in the African country would dash hopes of maintaining a shaky ceasefire brokered by Uganda, Burundi, Zaire, Rwanda and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in April.

RPF leader Alex Kanyarengwe accused President Juvenal Habyarimana of failing to honour the ceasefire by continuing to attack rebel positions.

"As far as we are concerned everything is back to square one. We shall take the government on until they agree to talks with us," he said in the faxed message.

RPF spokesman Shabason Syabaka said Rwanda has "failed to respect the ceasefire and all we are doing is responding to its military advances."

The rebel claims of a new flare-up in the civil war came a week after Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni expelled a Rwandan military observer team that had been stationed on the border.

Gorbachev: No summit likely before late July

MOSCOW (AP) — No U.S.-Soviet summit is likely before late July, Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev said Wednesday, citing delays caused by complex arms issues and a meeting of leading economic powers in London.

The Soviet President, voting in the Russian Federation presidential election, also said he received a letter Tuesday from U.S. President George Bush "that informed me of some good and interesting news." He did not elaborate.

U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker told reporters that he had given the Soviet foreign minister a letter from Bush to Gorbachev with "some new ideas," but it was not clear whether it concerned arms control or economic issues.

American and Soviet negotiators are close to agreement on a treaty to slash their long-range nuclear arsenals, but cannot finish it before late June, when the two leaders had tentatively planned to meet in Moscow.

"We have agreed to resolve the undecided points on strategic and offensive weapons," Gorbachev told reporters. "There are few major questions left, but they are there. So we think that we can't make it in June."

"We won't have time" before the summit of the Group of Seven most industrialised nations in London in mid-July, he said. "Maybe in July," toward the end of the month, he said.

Gorbachev has been invited to London the last day of the economic summit to tell Western leaders how he wants to use their help to transform the Soviet Union from a centrally planned to a market economy.

Western leaders have been cautious in promising extensive loans, but Bush agreed Tuesday to grant the Soviets \$1.5 billion in credits to buy U.S. grain. Experts predicted the grain would be used to feed livestock.

Gorbachev repeated the theme of his Nobel Peace Prize lecture, delivered in Oslo, Norway, last week, that the West had a stake in maintaining Soviet stability.

"Times are changing very quickly," he said. "Both Western and Eastern Europe are changing, and especially our immense powerful state, which influences the whole world."

Congress hopes dampened by low turnout in Indian elections

BOMBAY (R) — Congress Party hopes for a surge of sympathy votes for assassination leader Rajiv Gandhi were dampened Wednesday as officials reported a low early turnout when India resumed critical elections delayed by his murder.

Fewer than 10 per cent of voters had stamped their ballots by mid-morning in southern Maharashtra state, officials said.

Congress had hoped to improve on its 1989 election performance in the state despite a fierce challenge from the past-rising Hindu revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), officials said.

In neighbouring Karnataka, heavy rains contributed to a low 20 per cent turnout by noon, half-way through the 10-hour voting day.

But there was relatively little of the violence that marred the first phase of voting May 20, the day before a woman suicide bomber killed Gandhi as he arrived for an election meeting in the southern state of Tamil Nadu.

The only serious early violence was in the northern state of Bihar, a hotbed of caste antagonisms, where police said two people were killed in clashes between party supporters.

They said several others were injured in clashes, or when police opened fire to separate them or

to fight off attempts to take over polling stations and stuff the ballot boxes.

One polling officer was arrested on charges of stuffing his ballot boxes, they added.

The turnout was slightly higher in Bihar, about 25 per cent by noon.

More than 100 million people — nearly one-fifth of the world's biggest electorate — were eligible to vote Wednesday. Most of the rest were scheduled to vote Saturday.

Many analysts see no party winning a majority in the 545-seat parliament and say a coalition, probably forming around Congress, is almost inevitable. Vote-counting starts Sunday and firm results are expected within two days.

The elections were spread out over a week to allow security forces to be shifted around to prevent the rigging attempts and voter intimidation that are routine features of Indian elections.

The last two days of voting were delayed by the Gandhi assassination and his Congress Party, privately unsure of winning a majority, was hoping a surge of sympathy would lift it.

It was especially hoping for a "sympathy wave" in the south, where Gandhi was killed and

where Congress did well in 1989 despite heavy losses in the Hindi-speaking northern belt that numerically dominates parliament.

Congress, which has ruled India for all but three years since independence from Britain in 1947, appears to be doing no better in the north this time.

The BJP has been rising on a powerfully emotive campaign playing on Hindu religious emotions and latent anti-Muslim feelings.

But businessmen in Bombay, India's commercial and financial centre as well as the Maharashtra capital, said they expected the murder to simply halt the rise of the BJP and its even more right-wing ally in the state, Shiv Sena.

"I don't know if you would call it a sympathy wave, but Gandhi's assassination broke the momentum of what was happening," said money broker Jamal Maclai.

India started voting after 18 months of cast and religious violence in which two minority governments fell and in the middle of the country's worst economic crisis. Voters were cynical.

Maclai said the assassination had not changed that. "I don't think there is a single Indian voter who gives politicians credit for anything," he said.

Police teargas South Korean student's funeral

SEOUL (R) — South Korean police fired teargas Wednesday to control a surging crowd of more than 30,000 workers and students marching through Seoul for the funeral of a student killed last month in an anti-government protest.

Witnesses said the funeral of 25-year-old Kim Kwi-Jong was boisterous but generally orderly. Only a few teargas grenades were fired at the crowd, which stopped for a funeral ritual near the spot where the woman was killed.

Despite the teargassing, the long funeral procession, preceded by students brandishing steel pipes and carrying signs calling for the downfall of president Roh Tae-Woo, was allowed to continue.

But in western Seoul, about 2,000 students clashed with police, tossing firebombs and paving stones. Police responded

with teargas.

Kim, a student of French literature at Seoul's Sunkwunkwan Confucian University, died May 25 in the capital during one of the anti-government demonstrations that have shaken South Korea since April 26, when riot police fatally beat a student during a protest.

Authorities have said she was trampled to death by panicky fellow protesters, dissidents say she was suffocated by teargas or beaten by police.

Preliminary reports of a post mortem examination appear to support the officials.

About 20,000 riot police had been deployed in central Seoul for the funeral procession. Authorities had banned some portions of the march but commanders on the scene allowed the mourners to proceed.

Banners carried by the mar-

chers bore slogans such as "we will overcome our sorrow and anger with struggle," "put Roh Tae-Woo in prison" and "seek revenge for the martyrs."

The coffin was carried by about 30 pallbearers surrounded by some 1,000 students wielding long wooden staves.

Many mourners wore T-shirts bearing Kim's portrait and carried black-draped placards bearing the dead woman's picture.

Funeral organisers had planned a number of roadside rituals, a traditional Korean funeral practice where the mourners stop for ceremonies at places associated with the dead person's life.

"We're walking on the streets walked by Kim Kwi-Jong but she can walk them no more," a student leader shouted through a loudspeaker as Kim's flag-draped coffin was carried out of the University campus.

Yugoslav leaders meet to ease political tension

BELGRADE (R) — The presidents of three Yugoslav republics met Wednesday to try to reach a compromise on nationalist conflicts that have caused at least 22 deaths this year and pushed the country close to civil war.

Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia and his arch-rival, Croatia's Franjo Tudjman, met Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina for talks amid heavy security in the Adriatic port of Split.

Bosnia is sandwiched between Communist-dominated Serbia, the largest of Yugoslavia's six republics, and secession-minded Croatia — the two main power brokers in the Balkan country's complex political equation.

Media speculate Milosevic and Tudjman want to divide Bosnia, which has a mixed population of Serbs, Croats and Muslims.

Bosnia would feel the brunt of a Yugoslav break-up because of that mixture. Many fear civil war could be fought there.

Bosnian police have inter-

cepted several shipments of arms in recent weeks, some destined for Serbs and others for Croats. Serbian paramilitary insurgents staged an incursion into the republic last Saturday.

The meeting came after a Croatian policeman was killed and a Serb blew himself up with his own bombs last Sunday, bringing to at least 22 the death toll in ethnic violence this year.

The Split meeting was the result of a summit of the leaders of all six republics last week which found nominal compromise between Serbian demands for a centralised federation and Croatian and Slovenian advocacy of a union of sovereign states.

"All aspects of relations between Serbs, Croats and Muslims will be discussed," a senior Croatian official said. He added this included internal borders.

He said Tudjman had a proposal for long-term solutions to tensions among the three ethnic groups but did not elaborate.

Anti-Chinese protests reported in Tibet

BEIJING (R) — Police arrested 12 Tibetan nuns in Lhasa June 9 after they unfurled a Tibetan independence flag in the third consecutive Sunday protest against Chinese rule of the Himalayan region, travellers returning from Lhasa said Wednesday.

The protesters demonstrated briefly outside Tibetan Buddhism's holiest shrine, the Jokhang Temple, before police moved in, said the travellers who were told of the arrests by several different Tibetan sources.

The Tibet office in Beijing said it had not heard of the incident. Officials in Lhasa were not available for comment.

On the previous Sunday, June 2, four Tibetan monks were arrested after they also displayed a Tibetan independence flag, the travellers said.

The week before that about 20 people protested in Lhasa against Chinese rule of Tibet before police broke up the demonstration

and detained two people.

Under tight security, China last month celebrated 40 years of Communist rule over the Himalayan region.

The travellers said plainclothes and uniformed police still swarmed throughout the city. Soldiers with guns and spotlights stood guard on some rooftops.

Many shopkeepers refused to open their doors Friday, Saturday and Sunday in protest at a rise in taxes to pay for the 40th anniversary celebrations, the travellers said.

China has all but shut off access to Tibet by foreign journalists since it imposed martial law in Lhasa in March 1989 after three days of separatist protests and rioting that were quelled by police opening fire on crowds.

Martial law was lifted in May of last year but tight restrictions on travel by foreigners remain in effect. No Beijing-based foreign journalists were allowed to attend the anniversary celebrations.

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